

THE
Minister of *Cirencester's*
ADDRESS
TO THE
Dissenters of his Parish.

Occasion'd by the
DEATH of Their PREACHER.

Together with the
ANSWER that was made thereto,
AND
His REPLY to that ANSWER.

To which is prefixed,
A **LETTER** relating thereto, from the Right Reverend
Father in GOD,
Edward Lord Bishop of Gloucester.
(*Joseph Harrison*)

ECCLUS. xxi. 15.

*If a skilful Man hear a wise word, he will commend it, and add unto it :
but as soon as one of no understanding heareth it, it displeaseth him,
and he casteth it behind his Back.*

L O N D O N,

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Answer of the Bishop of
Exeter to the Bishop of
London

Letter of the Bishop of
Exeter to the Bishop of
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Letter of the Bishop of
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London

To the Reverend
M^R. JOSEPH HARRISON,
MINISTER of Cirencester.

S I R,
I Have read your Address to the *Dis-*
senters of your Parish, with the very
idle and trifling Answer thereto,
and your Reply to that Answer; and ad-
vise you to publish the *whole*, unless you
can be content (as I know you cannot)
to take so much good pains to little pur-
pose. Your *Address* is a very Commen-
dable Instance of your Hearty Concern
conscientiously to discharge that Great
Trust which is committed to you; and
your *Defence* thereof is as good a Proof
of your being no less able than desirous
to do the Office of a *Pastor*, even towards
those who refuse to *own* you as such.

I wish the *most Sincere* in the several *Sects*
which have renounc'd Communion with
us, could but think it *possible* that *they may*
be in an *Error*, and thereupon be perswa-
ded to read, with any Impartiality, what
is written *against*, as well as *for*, their Sepa-

To Mr. Joseph Harrison.

ration: I should not then doubt, but this *Deplorable Schism* would wear off apace, among those who make not a Trade of it, and are not *Wolves in Sheeps Clothing*; since I am most certain, that the Errors of *Po-pery* are not more plainly detected and expos'd, than have the Principles of our *Protestant Separatists* been abundantly confuted, and the great Vanity of their Pretences demonstrated, to all that are capable of Seeing with their own Eyes.

That GOD would Bless this *very good Endeavour* of Yours, to the Reducing of such to His Church as are gone astray, and the more Confirming those, who have hitherto been kept by his Grace in the Communion thereof: And, that He would crown *all* your Labours with happy Success, and make you as instrumental to the Reforming of the *Lives* of your People, as the Rectifying of their *Judgments*, is the most Hearty and Humble Prayer of,

S I R,

Your very loving Friend and Brother,

EDW. GLOUCESTER.

To My Well-beloved
Friends and Parishioners,
Who do not frequent the
Communion of the Church.

THO' it has pleased God to take away him whom your
Selves had Appointed and Setled here, as a Distinct
and Peculiar Teacher of your own, yet I must tell you,
that this Parish is not yet (thro' God's Blessing) deprived of a
Minister, who will be ready, to the utmost of his Power, to
serve every Member thereof in the great and concerning In-
terest of their Souls.

It is I my Self, who am here placed according to the Laws
of God, and by the Laws of the Land, and I do now offer
my Self (before you make Choise of any other) to Minister be-
fore God, and for You, in all the Offices of Religion, according
to the Order and Constitution of that Primitive and Apostolical
Church Established among Us, to which I am inseparably tied
by my Reason and Conscience, and in all manner of Sacred and
Solemn Obligations.

This Church, my Brethen, is the Church you ought to Hold
Communion with, Our Parish Church is the place where you ought
to Serve and Worship God; and I (how unworthy soever) am
the only Person whose proper Business it is to Perform any Mi-
nisterial Office in this Parish, and against whose either Life or
Doctrin, I hope, no just Exception can be made.

I do therefore most passionately Exhort, and earnestly Beseech
you all, in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, that you will, as you ten-
der the Peace of Church and State, and the Welfare of your own
Souls, stedfastly Adhere to the Communion thereof.

To my Friends and Parishioners.

If your Separation is groundd upon real Scruples of Conscience, you should certainly Endeavour to have them answered and Removed; and I shall be very ready, and I trust in God, able to give full Satisfaction to any One that shall desire it of Me.

But if the Reason of any One's dissenting from Us be only Humour or Prejudice, he can never think that either of them will bear him out at the Great Day, for Keeping up a Schism in the Church of God, and Rending and Dividing the Body of Christ.

Before you Resolve to carry on the Separation, I Entreat You, for your own Soul's sake (for whose everlasting Happiness I have a tender Regard) to Consider well the Grounds and Reasons upon which you do it, for Schism is not certainly so slight a Matter, and so small a Crime, as some People think it to be.

And if nothing will dissuade you from Maintaining the Divisions among us by bringing in another Preacher, I hope you will take Care that he be a Person of Prudence and Temper, One that will strictly Confine Himself within the Bounds and Limits of the Act of Toleration, and who will be very cautious of doing any thing that will give Disturbance in a Parish, which is at present in a very peaceable and quiet state, notwithstanding the Differences among Us as to some matters of Religious Concern; as to which also I most humbly Beseech God, in his due time, to Unite Us.

I am

Your Affectionate Pastor, and

Sincere Lover of your Souls,

JOSEPH HARRISON.

T H E
*Ministers Reply to the Dissenters Answer
 to the foregoing Invitation of them into the
 Communion of the Church.*

Most Dearly Beloved in Christ ;

I Cannot express how much I am concern'd, that the P A P E R which I sent among you upon so Christian an Errand, and the Message it contain'd, express'd in so inoffensive and obliging a manner, and writ with that Sincerity and Purity of Intention, as if I had been immediately to have Answered for it at the dreadful Tribunal of Heaven: I cannot I say, express my Concern, that such a Paper as this should be so far from having any good Effect upon those it was sent to, as to exasperate them against it, its Author, and the Church, into whose Communion its business was to invite them, to so high a degree, that *when I laboured for Peace, and spake unto them thereof, they made themselves ready for Battle.*

As for the Reflections and uncharitable Censures which have been made upon me, either upon the Account of this, or any other Matter, I do most heartily forgive them, and humbly beseech God to do so too; and also to support me with Courage and Patience under all the Opposition and Contempt which I have already, and must expect to meet with, even in the Discharge of my Duty: And this is all the Return I shall make to them.

But forasmuch as my kind Invitation to you is Answered, not by an humble and modest Excuse of your selves, but by a Paper which is stuffed with false Accusations of our Church, and uncharitable Censures of those in Her Communion, I think it will become me to endeavour, not only your Conviction, by shewing you how ill a Defence you have made, and how weak those Arguments are, which are here brought in Defence of your Separation from us; but also to Vindicate our Church from the ill-grounded Charges there layd against Her of *Idolatry, Judaism, Popery, Schism, Unlawful Impositions, Superstitions, and Traditions.*

Heavy Charges these are, and yet they are all either expressed, or clearly implied in this Paper, and the Sentence of *Damnation* passed upon us into the bargain. I shall not stand to Examine into the Charity of the Man that writ it, but into the Arguments he produces to prove all these things; and if they do appear to have no solid Foundation, but on the contrary, to be weak and fallacious, or rather no Arguments at all, you must either Renounce the Separation, and come to

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Church,

Church, or bring better Reasons for your Refusal so to do; which I believe your *Cause* will not admit of, or that however *none* of you can do it.

I am not much concerned to know who my *Answerer* is, only I shall say, that if he had thought fit to have sent his *Paper* to me alone, with his Name subscribed to it, I should have contented myself, that the Matters in Controversie should have been amicably debated, either in private Letters, or in private Conversation, betwixt him and me alone. But since he has sent it abroad, and put it into your hands, to harden you in your Separation, and widen the Breach between us, I cannot think that I have discharged my Duty towards you, till I have shewed you the weakness of those Arguments, by which, those that call themselves the *Authorized Ambassadors of Christ*, pursue those *Unchristian* Ends.

Whether the *Answer* I have returned be sufficient, I must leave to your Judgments to determine, but that you may better apprehend the Force of what is said on both sides, I have faithfully transcribed the Answer to my Paper, according to the Copy I met with, and replied to it Paragraph by Paragraph.

Read both then without Prejudice, and God Almighty enable you to Judge *righteous Judgment*, and give you Grace sincerely to Act according thereto.

A N S W E R.

Sir, I have lately received a Paper, with your Name subscribed to it, which makes me think that it is of your own inditing; and were all in it according to the Rule we ought to walk by, the Word of God, I should have been silent without making any Reply against it; but when you tell us our Parish is not through God's Blessing deprived of a Minister, who will be ready to the utmost of his power, to serve every Member thereof, in the great and concerning Interest of their Souls: For my part, I should most readily accept of your Offer, were you but duly qualified for so great a Work.

R E P L Y.

I should not have known what he meant by his telling me, he believes it to be of my own inditing, had I not heard that some of the Party questioned it, and endeavoured to blast the success of it, by denying me the Reputation of composing a few Lines, so easie for any body to have done; and wherein the main thing commendable, is the honesty of the design, and that it is better English than the *Answer* to it. But what if in consideration of the great Abilities of the Persons I sent it to, and the severe Examination, I might justly presume it would fall under, by the Learned Ambassadors, I had called in the Assistance of my Brethren, what Fault

Fault had I been guilty of? Or, What just Ground of Exception was That against the Matter of it? And suppose a Number of us should be in Consult for *two Months together*, how to Reply to their Answer to a poor Paper that was (as it easily might be) drawn up, transcribed into several Copies, and dispersed abroad in two or three days time; could those *quick Gentlemen* handsomely find fault with us? Or would this be any thing to the Merits of the Cause? No, this could not be; for he himself says, That if all in my Paper were according to the Word of God, he would have made no Reply. But then he should not have Replyed, without shewing wherein 'twas contrary; which he has not directly offered at, as to any one Line thereof. Nor should he, or any of the Party reject the Offer of my Service, upon the account of my being *Unqualified*, without shewing wherein it is that I am so. If he mean *Personal Qualifications*, I will only say with St. Paul, *Who is sufficient for these things?* But be my Defects never so great, yet if I am ready, to the utmost of my power, to promote the Salvation of every Soul in my Parish, I doubt not but to come off well at the Last Day, and that (whether you will or no) God will graciously accept my *sincere*, though weak Endeavours. But Mr. Baxter tells you, 'That if the Minister of the Parish be tolerable, tho' weak and cold, if you cannot remove your dwelling, then publick Order, and your Souls Edification must both be 'joynd as well as you can.'

Poor Man's
Family Book;
4 Ed. p. 316.

A N S W E R.

I confess you tell us you are placed here according to the Laws of God, and that your Church is the Primitive Apostolical Church, but I am well satisfied, that you are not able by Scripture to prove either of your Assertions.

R E P L Y.

And so I tell you still, and tho' confident Assertions of Christs *Authorized Ambassadors* may go a great way with poor ignorant People, who are deluded into that Opinion of them; yet I am well satisfied he cannot *disprove me* by Scripture: And this is what he ought to have attempted; for since as to my *Orders*, (without which I hope he does not think I act) I am upon the same bottom with all the *Clergy of England*, till he sheweth wherein our Church deviates from the *Ancient Church*, I shall esteem it a sufficient Proof, (equivalent to an express Text of Scripture) that I am placed here according to the *Laws of God*; because I was Ordained and placed here by those, with whom Christ hath left the Power to send forth Labourers into his Vineyard; and that our Church is *Primitive and Apostolical*, because its Faith, Worship, Government and Discipline are such.

John 20. 21
Tit 1. 5.

ANSWER.

As to your being inseparably tyed by Reason and Conscience, and all manner of sacred and solemn Obligations, Sir I am heartily sorry for you, and look upon it as your great Unhappiness that you are so confined.

REPLY.

If this Person had any real occasion to be sorry for me upon this score, I should heartily thank him for his Pity; but undoubtedly it is the great Duty, and the great Happiness of every Man, sincerely to follow the Dictates of his *Reason and Conscience*, and strictly to keep the *sacred and solemn Obligations* he lyes under.

ANSWER.

Although you tell us this Church is the Church we ought to hold Communion with, and our Parish Church the Place we ought to serve and worship God in, and that you, how unworthy soever, are the Person whose proper business it is to perform any Ministerial Office in this Parish, this Doctrine I doubt not but will take with the Church of Rome; for they will tell you, that their Church is the Church you ought to hold Communion with, and the Parish Church, the place you ought to serve and worship God in, and will give as good Proofs for what they assert as you have in your Paper.

REPLY.

I wish with all my heart that this Doctrine would take with those of the *Church of Rome* in this Kingdom; but if he means that *Papists* may urge the same thing to invite *Protestants* into their Communion, I would fain ask this Man, whether he does in his Conscience think, that they may do it, upon as good Grounds and Reasons as we do? For that's the Question, and not whether they can give as *Good Proofs* as any I have in *My Paper*; for as there was not room, so neither was it the Business and Design thereof to give *Proofs*. To those who wanted them, and desired them of me, I offered to give the best Satisfaction I was able,

ANSWER.

Sir, *As to your Life and Doctrine against which you hope no just Exception can be made, it is best known to God and your Conscience how you have lived, and what Doctrine you have preached and believed: Only I shall say this, that if you can make it appear you have lived and preached according to the Rule*
Christ

Christ hath set us, you may expect Peace and Comfort at the last day, but till then you may never expect us to embrace the Exhortation, altho' we render the Peace of Church and State and the eternal Happyness of our own Souls above all earthly things, and do hope through Grace stedfastly to hold Communion with that Church whereof Jesus Christ is the Head, against which the Gates of Hell shall never prevail.

REPLY.

It is a strange way to put me upon the Proof that my *Life and Doctrine* hath been according to the Rule Christ hath set us. He should rather have asked those that have heard and conversed with me. If he, or any of those whose Cause he espouses, have any Objection against either, let them, in the Name of God, speak and spare not; let them be as inquisitive as they are desirous to find Faults. I fear not the utmost Effort of their Malice: But do thou, O God, be merciful to me a Sinner: Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no Man living be justified. If nothing appears against either my *Life or Doctrine*, you ought in Charity to believe both to be agreeable to God's Word, and then (according to your Champion himself) to embrace the Exhortation I made you.

You may pretend as great a *Tenderness* as you please for the Peace of Church and State, yet it is undeniable Matter of Fact, that by the Separation, both are mightily disturbed and disquieted; and tho' I am unwilling to carry the Controversie so high, as to dispute, whether (according to the Laws and Rules of Catholick Communion) you do hold Communion with that Church of which Jesus Christ is the Head: Yet I beg leave to tell you, that Jesus Christ is not the Head of this or that particular *Sett or Party* of Christians only, but of the whole Catholick Church, of which our *Establish'd Church* being a true and sound Part or Branch, by vertue of your Profession to hold Communion with that, you will (if you drive the Argument as far as in its just Consequence it will bear) find your selves obliged to hold *Actual Communion* with this. But to save my self the trouble of pursuing this Argument as far as it will go, I refer you to the *Case of Church-Communion*, stated by a learned Hand for your right information. And I pray, as Mr. Baxter advises you, endeavour to understand the right Terms of Church-Communion; especially 'the Unity of the Universal Church, and the Universal Communion' which you must hold with all the Parts. And hereupon I desire you'll let me ask you, whether or no you do not really believe the *Establish'd Church of England* to be a true Church of Jesus Christ, a Church of which he is the Head, and with which he holds Communion? The most eminent and sober Nonconformists, as it can and has been proved, have own'd Her to be a true Church; that She is sound and true as to her Doctrine; that

*Poor Man's
Family-Book,
p. 273.*

*Case of Lay-
Communion.*

that her Worship, for Matter and Substance, is good, and for Edification; that her Ministry is true, and the same for Substance which Christ hath establish'd. Nay, they have not only own'd the Church of England to be a true Church, but have looked upon it as the most valuable in the World, both as to the Church it self, and as to the Ministry of it: And I dare be confident, that there is not an honest true Presbyterian in England, but will say (if he will be ingenuous) that the Church of England (by which I alwaies mean that Establish'd Church from whose Communion you separate) is a true Member of Christ's Body, and that Christ holds Communion with her. Now (as the Presbyterians of old asked their Brethren of the Separation, so ask I you) 'If we be a Church of Christ, and Christ hold Communion with us, why do you separate from us? If we be the Body of Christ, do not they that separate from the Body separate from the Head also?

Friendly Deb.
part I. p. 165.

A N S W E R.

Sir, give me leave to tell you our Separation is grounded upon real Scruples of Conscience, and there is but one way I know of to Answer them, and that is, to take away the Cause of them; for I can assure you, that it is neither Humor nor Prejudice that is the Cause of our Dissenting.

R E P L Y.

If you have not endeavour'd all you can to have your Scruples satisfied and removed, you do thereby shew your selves to be glad of them, and that therefore Humor and Prejudice have the greatest share in your Separation. But if after your best Endeavours for Satisfaction in those matters which make you withdraw from our Communion, you cannot obtain it; your Case is the more pitiable, and the more excusable, and I am by no means concerned at the Liberty which is indulg'd you. But to Answer your Scruples at so dear a rate, as the taking away our Liturgy, and the abolishing of Episcopacy, (which you do more than intimate is the Cause of them) is what, I hope, our Governours will never consent to; for (make what use of it you please) I do think them more valuable than your Company at Church, as earnestly as I do desire it.

A N S W E R.

But if you would know, I will tell you, it's the Liturgy, or Service-book, in which you impose such things on us, in order to Church-Communion, as the Word of God hath not required, but on the contrary forbidden. Prov. 30. 6. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a Lyar. Deut. 4. 2. Ye shall not add unto the Word, I command you; nei-

neither shall ye diminish ought from it. *What will ye then say for your selves, when God shall say unto you, Who hath required these things at your Hands? Sure I am, to do more in the Service of God than He hath required, will but Undo us; therefore the Wise Man exhorts, Be not righteous overmuch, why shouldst thou destroy thy self? Remember Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their Company, who for doing what was not required, were all consumed, the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up.*

R E P L Y.

Now he speaks out. And tho' the things you mainly scruple at, such as the Cross and Surplice, are mote properly Instances of Obedience to Human Authority than Terms of Church-Communion, which may be held by a Lay-Person, in the more constant Services of Prayers and Preaching, without joyning in those things he dislikes; yet if it be true, that the things imposed in our Liturgy are forbidden by God, then I own, that the fault of the Schism lies in us, and that you have very good reason for your separating from us. And if this Assertion were but as well proved, as 'tis confidently asserted, I would never again read the *Service-book*: But if you think me *duly qualified* for so great a Work, will Preach to, and Pray for you in the *Maul-house*; tho' I have hitherto most affectionately loved the *Habitation of God's House*, and the Place where his Honour dwells, and was alwaies glad when they said unto me, *We will go into the House of the Lord*. Let us therefore well examine the Proofs he produces for an Assertion deliver'd with so much Confidence, to say no worse of it.

He alledges two Texts of Scripture which are useless and impertinent, till it be proved, that we make real Additions to the Word of God. Those he mentions in the *Psalms* shall be consider'd by and by. That which I presume he here means, is, that the things enjoyn'd in our *Service-book*, being not commanded by God in his Word, are Additions to it; and that therefore these two Texts of Scripture are an undeniable Proof of the Unlawfulness of them, this must be his meaning, if he has any at all in what he says, and I think I have represented it with all the Advantage he can desire.

But now, if We are guilty of making *Additions* to the Word of God, we either do what that forbids, or Appoint somewhat else instead of what God hath appointed; or We add such Expositions to the Commandment, as the End of it is thereby frustrated; or we make that which is not the Word of God to be of equal Authority with that which is; or else we give the same Efficacy to Humane Institutions as God does to His: But he can never charge us with any of these. and how then can he charge us with *Additions* to the Word of God? for ad-

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ding, is adding to the Substance, and making the thing added of the nature of the thing it is added to; but when the Substance remains entire, as much after this Humane Appointment as it was before it, it cannot be called an Addition to it, in the sence the Scripture takes that word in.

But to the Argument which these Men draw from *Deuter. iv. 2.* *Christ. Libert.* Dr. Fowler, (our present Bishop) a great while ago, replied, "That if p. 183. they be not mistaken in the Sense of these words, they will prove more than is intended to be proved, or than they would have true; namely, that nothing is to be done out of, as well as in, the Worship of God, but what is expressly and particularly commanded. But *Epi-scopins* (who may be listen'd to in this matter, because no Episcopalian) hath shewed that these words [*Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it.*] are no new Precept, but only signifie, Ye shall not transgress the Commandments of God, by doing any thing contrary to them, which is to Add; or by omitting any thing Required by them, which is to Diminish.

And therefore, tho' ignorant People may be scared with the improper Application of that of *Isa. i. 12*, yet it cannot belong to us, who place no farther Religion and Acceptableness in our Prayers and Services, than as they are accompanied with that Sincerity, Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, without which God told the Jews He had no delight in their Sacrifices, tho' they were of his own appointing; nor had required them to tread his Courts without these divine Qualifications. But if We must Answer to that Question, *Who hath Required these things at your Hands?* then I tell You (for God knows it, and we are not afraid to appear before him upon that account) that forasmuch as these things are no where forbidden, We comply with them in Obedience to that Word which requires us to obey them that have Rule over us, and to submit our selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake.

Heb. 13. 17.
1 Pet. 2. 13.

And if this be the Word of God, how comes this Man so uncharitably to pronounce the Sentence of Damnation upon us, and tell us, we shall be But undone, (as if that were not Punishment enough) for doing more in the Service of God than He hath requir'd? Why, he grounds it upon *Eccles. 7. 16*, & *Numb. 16*.

As for the Exhortation of the Wise Man, (if the best Commentators I have seen understand it right) 'tis the best Advice I can give to you, it being interpreted of Heat and Zeal more than needs, without Reason and Discretion; which as it makes all the Schisms in the World, so produces a great many other Evils. I appeal to the whole World, whether it is not properly Returned upon you, who are transported into an excessive Zeal and Rage against innocent Ceremonies, and meer Circumstances of Worship, and which are declared to be so, and no way Essential to Religion by that Church which uses them. And to

this

this you must give me leave to add the other part of the Verse, (which he left out) *neither make thyself over-wise*: Do not (without some better Grounds) oppose your private Opinion to the Judgment and Authority of a whole Nation: And, in particular, of as Pious and Learned a Clergy as any the whole World can shew. Consider that it is possible you may be mistaken, and that it does not become you to Assume that *Infallibility* to your selves, which you deny to the Church of Rome.

As for the Example of *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, if it be well consider'd, our Case cannot be made *Parallel* to it: But it highly deserves your Consideration, whether you are not in some measure guilty of the like Crime; which did not consist in doing what was not required, but in *Actual Rebellion* against *Moses* and *Aaron*, the Ministers of God; and therefore against God himself. What a strange Consequence then is this! *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, and their Company, were all consum'd for *murmuring* and *rebellling* against *Moses* and *Aaron*; and therefore we shall be undone for obeying the Commandments of those God hath placed over us. Certainly there is a more natural Inference to be drawn from this amazing Instance of God's Judgments upon disobedient Persons, and were there not a strange Mist before your Eyes, you could not but see it, and make a more suitable Application of it.

A N S W E R.

Sir, give me leave to tell you, that whatsoever is placed in God's Worship without the Command of God, is an Idol; for none hath Power to Ordain or Place a Ceremony in Christ's Church but himself, who is King of it. A clear Proof you have, Numb. 19. 30. And it shall be unto you for a Fringe, that you may look upon it, and remember all the Commandments of the Lord, and do them, and that you seek not after your own Heart, and your own Eyes, after which you used to go a whoring.

R E P L Y.

I believe never poor Man undertook such a Task as I have done, to Answer so much *Impertinence*. But since I have begun, I must have Patience, and that will carry me through it all. He would fain possess the People (among whom this Paper was to be shewn with so much Triumph) with an Opinion, that we have Idols in our Church: But does he think that I can swallow things without chewing, as they do? That he begs leave to tell me, that whatsoever is placed in God's Worship, without the Command of God, is an Idol; i.e. it is the Representation of some Divine or Beatified Object, which is as such propounded and set up for Adoration. Was there ever such a wild Assertion? Or could any Man think it possible, that he should so luckily hit upon such a Text of Scri-

pture to prove it by? God Commands the Children of *Israel* to put Fringes upon the Borders of their Garments, to be a Remembrancer to them of God's Commands and their Duty of Obedience; ergo, whatsoever is placed in God's Worship, without the Command of God, is an Idol. Where the Consequence is, I profess, I cannot see: But if your Eyes are clearer than mine, I desire you to examine the strength of it in another Instance, besides that of the Cross and Surplice. The laying the Hand upon, and kissing the Book, in the taking of an Oath, (which is both a Natural and Instituted part of Worship) is appointed without the Command of God, and therefore the laying the Hand upon, and kissing the Book, is an Idol, or rather the Book it self. A clear Proof you have, *Numb. 15. 39.*

But possibly I may carry this Matter further than he intended. He took it perhaps for an undoubted Truth, which wanted no Proof, that whatsoever is placed in God's Worship, without the Command of God, is an Idol; and therefore he might not urge this Text of Scripture for the confirmation of that, but to prove, that none hath Power to Ordain or Place a Ceremony in Christ's Church, but himself, who is King of it. But since he herein directly opposes one of the Thirty nine Articles, the Opinion and Practice of the whole Church of God, and even St. Paul's Direction to the *Corinthians*, to appoint whatsoever shall be tending to Decency and Order; he should certainly have given some better Proof than a Text out of the *Old Testament*, which does not relate to the Worship of God; and which, in my Opinion, would much better have proved, that the Parliament should not have enacted, That Poor Persons Receiving Parish Collection shall, in an open and visible manner, wear a Badge, and that too upon the Shoulder of the Right Sleeve of the uppermost Garment; because, as one of them once told me, (when there was formerly such a private Order among our selves) it was no where commanded in the Word of God that they should be marked like Sheep.

A N S W E R.

Again, that which is Man's Device, and hath been an Idol in God's Worship, must of necessity be an Idol still in the Worship of God; but the Ceremonies mention'd in the Service-book have been Idols in God's Worship, as the Cross and Surplice; ergo they must be Idols still in the Worship of God. Read *Josh. 7. 13.* there the Lord Commands *Joshua*, saying, Up, sanctifie the People, for thus saith the Lord God of *Israel*, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, *O Israel*. Nay, God tells *Joshua*, he would not be with them any more, except they destroyed the accursed thing, i. e. the Babylonish Garment which *Achan* had taken and hid in the midst of his Tent. For this he and his Sons and his Daughters, and all that he had, must be stoned with Stones, and burned with Fire.

R E P L Y.

I shall take his *Syllogism* to task presently : But beforehand I cannot but observe what an excellent Textuary this Man is, and how happy in his Application of Scripture. I have read the seventh Chapter of *Joshua*, and I refer him back again thereto, and also to *Co. 6, v. 17, 18.* where *Joshua* accurses *Jericho*, and every thing in it, and forbids the *Israelites*, under the Penalty of bringing a Curse upon the Camp, to meddle with any thing therein : But *Achan*, contrary to this express Prohibition, had taken the accursed thing, and had also stolen and dissembled also, and put it amongst his own Stuff. *Ch. 7, Ver. 11.* What was this accursed thing which he stole ? *Ver. 21, It was a goodly Babylonish Garment, and Two hundred Shekels of Silver, and a Wedge of Gold of Fifty Shekels weight, them he coveted and took.* So that, you see, the Reason why *Achan* was so severely punish'd, was his absolute Disobedience to the Command of God, in taking of that which God had cursed : his *Stealth*, *Covetousness*, and *Dissimulation*. Now what is the Consequence of all this ? Does it appear that the *Babylonish Garment* was a *Surplice*, or so much as used in the Worship of God ; or that the *Wedge of Gold* was a *Cross*, or that *Achan's* Crime in stealing the *Garment* was greater than that of stealing the *Two hundred Shekels of Silver* ? Tho' this learned Expositor explains the accursed thing by [that is, the *Babylonish Garment*]. But if the *Babylonish Garment* had been a *Surplice*, and used by them in the Worship of God, what then ! was it therefore an *Idol*, and an accursed thing, and therefore to be burned ? I answer positively, No ; because for that very reason, all the *Silver, and Gold, and Vessels of Brass, and Iron*, were to be brought into the Treasury of the Lord. But all the *Silver, and Gold, and Vessels of Brass, and Iron*, are consecrated unto the Lord : they shall be brought into the Treasury of the Lord, *Ch. 6. 19.* And this I urge as an Argument against his Triumphant *Syllogism* ; every Proposition of which, and the Consequence also, I utterly deny. For, 1st, That which hath been an *Idol* in God's Worship, must not of necessity be an *Idol* still, if it was not an *Idol* in its own nature, or made so by a standing and positive Law. I deny his *Minor* also ; for, allow that the *Cross*, and *Surplice*, and other Ceremonies, have been used in Idolatrous Worship, yet it does not follow that they were *Idols*, unless they had some *Prototype*, or represented some Divine Object, and were set up for Adoration. Things lawful in themselves may be used in Idolatrous Worship, such as *Time, Place, Habit, and Posture* ; but then it no more follows from thence, that they were *Idols*, than that the *Vessels of Brass and Iron*, before mention'd, were *Idols* ; or that the holy *Water* and *Vestments* are *Idols*, which are used, when they say *Mass*, in the Church of *Rome*. But supposing that both his Propositions are true,

Answer to the
Unlawfulness
of Com. Pray-
worsb. p. 9.

1 Cor. x. 25,
25.

Numb. 14. 41.

yet his Consequence is very false, That the *Cross* and *Surplice* must be Idols still, or (as I suppose he would now word it, if he had it to revise again) *Idolatrous*: 'For when Idolatry is not in the Nature of the thing but in the Use, take away the Use and the Idolatry ceaseth; and consequently it may be lawfully used where there is no Idolatry in the Worship, and no Idolatry in the use of it: And if it be not to be used, it is not because it is unlawful in it self to use it, but because it is forbidden by God, as was the Case among the *Jews*, or because of some Circumstances that make it inconvenient and dangerous. Thus it was lawful to eat that Meat which had been offer'd to Idols, when it was afterwards exposed to sale in the Shambles, or set upon the Table at an Entertainment, because it was thereby restored to a common use. It is then no more Idolatry to use a white Garment, (or a Ceremony) or a Temple, or observe a Day, or to use a Prayer that has been used or observed in Idolatrous Worship, or by an Idolatrous Church, than it was to eat Meat that had been offer'd to Idols. Purifie the Gold, and separate the Dross from it, and the Gold is not the worse for the Dross that was before mingled with it. Scrape the Walls, and cast out the infected Materials of it, so that the House be freed from the Leprosie, and it might have been as well inhabited as if it had never been infected. And this is the Upshot of that Charge of Idolatry, which he would fain fasten upon us. He can produce nothing that is *Idolatrous* among us. The *Cross* and *Surplice*, he says, have been used in *Idolatrous Worship*; but if we allow him what he says, it does him no Service, forasmuch as the Abuse of things in themselves lawful, even to Idolatrous Purposes, is no Argument against the lawful use of them. And this is Answer enough to what he says about the Original of the *Surplice*; for let its Parentage be as base and scandalous as he would have it thought to be, yet it does not make the Use of it Unlawful, if the thing it self is not so.

A N S W E R.

The Unlawfulness of this Babylonish Garment will further appear, if we look into the Original whence we had it. Some Authors tell us, we have it from Heathen Rome, which in her Idolatrous Service did aposthly imitate Aaron's Garments; as it is instanced in the Reign of Numa, eight hundred Years after the Law. Others tell us, we have it from the Druides, the mad Heathen Priests among the Gauls and Brittons, or from the Antichristian Rome, or lastly, from the Priestly Office of Aaron, which Heathen and Popish Rome hath impiously follow'd, denying thereby the Lord Jesus to be come in the Flesh, who with his Graces was typified out by those goodly and beautiful Garments, which being Shadows, are done away, and Christ the Body is come. For us then to imitate them in their Relicks, or to devise a Priest.

Priestly Garment of our own head in God's Worship, is to rob Christ of his Honour exceedingly, and to make our selves deeply guilty of Will-worship: For had not God clothed those Garments in the Law with a particular and punctual Command for Matter and Manner, they had been ridiculous things; They made the holy Garment, saith Moses, as the Lord commanded, Exod. 39, which latter words [as the Lord commanded] are repeated nine several times in this Chapter, intimating, they did not swerve one jot from God's Direction, teaching all God's Servants thereby, that they contain themselves within the Limits of God's Word, and bring nothing into the Service of God of their own invention, for the Apostle calls that Will-worship.

R E P L Y.

This *Babylonish Garment* he has mighty Spite to, and to render it the more odious, he would gladly derive its Pedigree, but he is not *Genealogist* enough to do it. Authors, he would have me know he has read; but who they are he is afraid to tell, lest it might be made appear he has read none of them, or has made as bold with them as he has done with the Bible, and misinterpreted and misapplied them, as he has done this sacred Book; or that, however, they are such deep learned Men as himself, who know nothing of the matter. The *Surplice* is derived from some-body, he knows not who, either from *Heathensh* or *Antichristian Rome*, from the mad *Heathen Priests*, or from *Aaron's Garments*, which were good and beautiful in themselves, and yet had been ridiculous, if God had not appointed them. What if I should say, some Authors tell us, it was derived from Christ and his Apostles; how would he disprove me, or prove that it was not? But what if, without enquiring from whom it was first derived, or by whom else it was or is used, I should say, as I do, that it was a Garment used in the Primitive Church, as an Emblem of, and an Admonition to the Priests of that Purity and Innocence, wherewith they ought to be clothed; and that we use it in conformity to their Practice, and for the same reasons; and withal thinking it a *decenter Garment* to perform Ministerial Offices in, than either Coat or Cloak; what, I say, can he urge against this? or, what Reason can he give why the Governors of the Church may not prescribe what *Habit* for the Clergy, whether in the time of Divine Service, or out of it, which they shall think most *grave*, and most *decent*? Or if he will tell me why a Dissenting Preacher goes in *Black*, rather than in *Yellow*; if there be any thing of Reason in what he says, I will improve it into one, for wearing the *Surplice* during divine Administrations.

But what if this be taken from the *Garments of Aaron*, as he knows not whether it is or no? Why! Then those that use it, do thereby deny Christ to be come in the *Flesh*; but for what Reason does he say this?

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Because *Aarons Garments* were *Types and Shadows of Christ*, who being now come, they are to be done away. If he is such a Logician, as really to think this to be good Arguing, yet it will not at all conclude against the Use of the *Surplice*, till he has shewed first, what it was that was typified and shadowed out thereby, which is now *Abolished by Christ*; and proved secondly, that it is used by us out of any *Judaizing Principle*.

What this weak Man means by *imitating them in their Relicks*, I know not; but I leave it to be tryed by what has been already said, whether To devise a *Priestly Garment* of our own head in *God's Worship*, be to rob *Christ* of his Honour exceedingly, and to make our selves deeply guilty of *Will-worship*. But let me ask him, Does the *Scripture* any where say so? Or does the *Apostle* any where call this *Will-worship*? Why does he not quote Chapter and Verse? Or deduce it by some Logical and Natural Inference? No body I hope will believe this Man, purely upon the score of his Confidence: *God having clothed those Garments under the Law with a particular and punctual Command*, the Jews had been guilty of manifest Disobedience, if they had not made them as the Lord commanded; but being goodly and beautiful Garments, they could never have been esteemed ridiculous, if God had commanded nothing at all about them. And his commanding them, is I think, a good Argument, that in themselves they were not so. It is, I must confess, very observable, that there is so much *Humane Learning* in this Man and his Party, that they can count *Nine*, but what if God had commanded *Ninety* times in one Chapter, that the *Aaronical Garments* should only be made so and so, is it any thing to us, who, according to himself, are no ways concerned in those *Ceremonies and Shadows* of the Law, and to whom God has not given one particular direction in such Matters, but left us to the general Rules of *Decency and Order*, and the *Customs of the Churches of God*? We are therefore left at liberty, to use such Garments, as shall be judged most agreeable thereto; God under the Gospel, having neither forbidden, nor commanded the use of any: If it can be proved He has, then farewell *Surplice*. And here I cannot but wonder, that since this Man joyned the Cross with the *Surplice*, in his General Charge and Indictment, he did not also as particularly plead against that Ceremony, and endeavour to expose it, by deriving its Pedigree likewise. But as to the Lawfulness of the Use of the Cross, I refer the Reader to the Case of the Cross in Baptism, by Dr. *Restbury*.

This old Plea for Separation has been again and again answered by those who have writ in the defence of our Church; but, to make short work on't, I will only ask whether this that you assert; Namely, that we are not to bring any thing of *Man's Invention* into the Service of God, nor use any thing in his Worship, but what he has commanded, be the word of God

God, or? If it be not, how come you to impose it upon us for such, or charge that upon us for a sin, which is not *the transgression of any Law*? If it is the word of God, then it is either expressly such, or it is a clear Inference and Deduction from his express word. You cannot pretend the former, and therefore that which you say; is, that it clearly follows from God's particular prescribing the Garments of Aaron, and (to give this Man another Argument) the whole Levitical Service. The Consequence remains still to be proved: and against the Truth of it, I urge the Practice of the Jewish Church, who made no scruple of ordering divers things for which there was no Command, and yet they were never blamed for them by the Prophets, or our Saviour. Particularly David's design of building an House without God's Command, or his so much as speaking a word to him about it, was so far from being Faulty, that God commended him for it. Hezekiah continued the Feast of unleavened Bread seven days longer than the time appointed by the Law. Mordecai and Esther made an Ordinance for the yearly Observation of the Feast of Purim, without any Command from God that we read of. Of the four Fasts mentioned Zach. 8. there was only One Commanded. The Feast of the Dedication is known to be of modern and humane Institution, and yet it is as well known that our Saviour honoured it with his Presence. There was no Appointment for the singing a Paschal Hymn after the Passover, and yet our Saviour and his Disciples observed that Usage, and which therefore will not, I presume, be said to be sinful. Now if the Admittance of certain Usages not commanded was not sinful under the Law, where the manner of divine Worship was particularly specified, how comes it to be so now under the Gospel where there is no such particular Prescription, nor hardly any thing more than such general Rules as I have before mentioned, which are to be respectively applied by Superiors and Inferiors; such as, *let all things be done decently, and in order; and submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's Sake.*

1 Kings 8. 3.

2 Chron. 30.

23.

Est. 9. 20.

Zech. 8. 19.

1 Mac. 4. 9.

John 10. 22.

Mat. 26. 30.

1 Cor. 14. 40.

1 Pet. 2. 13.

This seems to me to be Answer enough to what this Man has said about the Unlawfulness of using anything in the Worship of God, but what he himself hath commanded; but that I may if possible confute and silence, if not convince the Urgers of this grand Objection, and even those who may perhaps manage it after a better Manner, than this weak Arguer has done: I will present to your Consideration what the Right Reverend the Bishop of our own Diocese hath with great clearness written upon this Subject. It is indeed a great deal to transcribe, but it is so full and pertinent to the business in hand, that my pains therein will be well bestowed, if you will but vouchsafe it an impartial Reading.

In his *Discourse of Christian Liberty*, Chap. 13 p. 176. he is speaking to that Notion of Christian Liberty, which makes it to consist in Freedom from those Laws of Men, that command things indifferent relating

to Religion and the Worship of God ; and makes it appear to be wild and false by these Considerations.

First, ' This Notion of Christian Liberty tends to introduce sad disorder and confusion into the Churches of Christ, and will certainly do it if practised upon. I need not go about to Prove, that the Order of Ecclesiastical as well as civil Societies consisteth principally in the due Regulation of things in their own Nature indifferent.

St. Paul hath enjoined that in the Church, *all things be done decently in Order*, 1 Cor. 14. 40. But how shall they be so done, if it be a Violation of our Christian Liberty to have any thing imposed upon us by our Governours for Decencies and Orders Sake? Particular Rules being not given us in Scripture about this Matter ; which to be sure would have been, were they not left to the Determination of the Governours of each Church, upon supposition that 'tis possible to give such as would well suit all Churches.

' Calvin, upon those words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. 11. 2. *Now I praise you Brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the Ordinances as I delivered them to you*, doth thus express his sense about this matter : Saith He, *we know that every Church is left free to appoint a Form of Polity for it self, because our Lord hath prescribed nothing certain. And he speaks this, you see, not as his own sense only, but as the sense, and that undoubted too, of his other Brethren of the Reformation : Whose Judgment, were it needful, we might largely produce to the same purpose. But there is no need of it, those very persons, who have been most zealous for the contrary Opinion, being forced to contradict it in their practice : And, for Orders sake, to determine such things in their several Church-administrations as are left perfectly undetermined in Scripture, (of which might be given very many instances) notwithstanding their Clamours against the Church of England upon this, as modest as she is in her impositions.*

' Secondly, This Notion of Christian Liberty is so great an infringement of the Liberty Christ hath left to Ecclesiastical Governours as not to leave them so much as it is certain the Governours of the Jewish Church were invested with, who yet were bound up and determined in a very great number of Particulars.

' Over and above the Multitude of Rites and Ceremonies which God himself did annex to the substance of his Worship, we read of not a few others that were added by Men. We have a large Account of such in Maimonides, in his Book *de Cultu Divino*, and the Holy Scriptures themselves present us with diverse such without the least intimation of God's dislike of them.

' Besides some of those which I mentioned, He gives other Instances viz. King Solomon's *Hallowing the middle part of the Temple for Sacrifices*, 1 Kings 8. 64. The *se. hours of Prayer in the Temple*, Acts 3. 1.

Se-

Several Alterations; and particularly that of the Gesture, in Eating the Passover; the which Christ declared his Approbation of by his Conformity to them, *Mat. 26. 20.* Those two known Rites of the Jews, not commanded in the Law, viz. that of joyning Baptism with Circumcision in admitting Proselytes, and that of *Pass Communion*, or Feast after the Passover. And these two our Saviour was so far from condemning, upon the score of their being of Humane Institution, that his two great Sacraments received their rise from them.

The Texts which are chiefly urged, to prove the Unlawfulness of bringing any thing into the Worship of God, but what He hath himself prescribed, are those in the Old Testament, wherein God declareth his Displeasure against some of the *Israelites*, for doing those things which he commanded them not; and one in the New, but cited out of the Old, where our Saviour reprehendeth the *Pharisees* for teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

Those Texts in the Old Testament are *Lev. 10. 1.* *Deut. 17. 3.* *Jer. 7. 31.* *Chap. 19. 5.* *Chap. 32. 35.* But I wonder that those who produce these Texts for such a purpose, could not see without our shewing it to them, that they all speak of such things as God did not only not Command, but had strictly Forbid.

In *Lev. 10. 1.* the thing which God saith He commanded them not, was *Nadab* and *Abihu's* offering *strange Fire* before the Lord; which was an Act of Disobedience to a most express Law, *Chap. 6. 12, 13.*

That in *Deut. 13. 3.* not commanded by God, was a most hainous Sin and a black Transgression of the First Commandment, viz. *Serving other Gods, and Worshipping of them, the Sun, the Moon, and the Host of Heaven.*

That not Commanded, *Jer. 7. 31.* was not only contrary to the Law of God, but a horrible Wickedness condemned by the Light of Nature, viz. the burning of their Sons and their Daughters in the Fire, in the Valley of Hinnom.

That which God saith, He commanded not, neither came it into his mind, *Jer. 19. 5.* was the same Unnatural Wickedness, viz. the burning their Sons with Fire for Burnt-offerings to *Baal*; and that in *Jer. 32. 35.* was the causing of their Sons and their Daughters to pass through the Fire unto *Molech*.

But what doth God's condemning such abominable Practices as these signify, towards the proving it unlawful to use or impose certain innocent Rites and Circumstances in Divine Worship, which are not expressly and particularly required by God; but may be truly said to be in the general required by him, as such are necessary to the decorous management of his Worship, and agreeable to the foremention'd Rule, of doing all things decently, and in order?

And whereas the Urgers of these Texts for the fore-said purpose do reply to us, that tho' they cannot deny but the Instances of the things not commanded mention'd in each of them, are things also prohibited, yet they are pertinently insisted upon by them, because it is tacitly implied in God's expressing them as things only not commanded, that things not commanded in his Worship offend him as well as things prohibited.

To this I briefly Answer, that this is subtle Arguing indeed, except it can be shewed, that God doth any where condemn the doing in his Worship what is lawful in its own nature, and no where forbidden by him, under the notion of a thing not commanded; which I dare affirm cannot be shewed. And I add, that nothing is more absurd, than to build Doctrines upon Idioms of the sacred Language; but this is too commonly done by the Men we are now dealing with; as I am able to shew in too many instances.

And if we should turn the Scales, and argue thus: such and such things are not forbidden by God, therefore they are commanded; we should not be guilty of a grosser Absurdity than they are, in inferring from God's not having Commanded them, that he hath therefore Forbidden them.

And as to that Text in the New Testament, *Mat. 15. 9. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* It is manifest, that that which is condemned in the Pharisees here is the setting up of their own Constitutions instead, or in the place of God's, and those too contrary to God's Commandments. This is evident from the Context. Our Saviour saith, *ver. 3. Why do you transgress the Commandments of God by your Traditions?* That is, saith Irenaeus upon these words, *They did not only frustrate the Law of God by Prevarication, mixing Wine with Water; but they also set their Law in opposition or contradiction to the Law of God, &c.* And, that so they did, appears by what follows, *ver. 4, 5, 6. for God commanded, saying, Honour thy Father and Mother, &c. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his Father or his Mother, it is a Gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his Father, he shall be free. Thus have you made the Commandment of God of none effect by your Tradition.* And then next follows a Citation out of *Isa. 29. 13.* according to the Septuagint, whereof these words are part, *viz. Ye Hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesie of you, saying, This people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

We will also consider these words as they are recited by *St. Mark, Ch. 7. 7.* with the Verse following, *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men: For laying aside the Commandment of God, ye hold the Tradition of Men, as the washing of Pots*

and Caps, &c. That is, according to Dr. Hammond's Paraphrase upon the place, You are those Hypocrites that profess great strictness in Performances towards God, and practise in some external things more than God commands you, and impose those on others, as the Commands of God, when they are only Humane Ordinances. As for the inward Purity of the Heart, and Actions, to which all God's Laws of Washings did refer, you take no care of them, transgress against this substantial part of Religion in the foulest manner, and spend all your Time in these External Superfluities, washing of Pots, &c. the Ordinances of your Rabbins only.

But, what are the hypocritical and wicked doings here condemned, to Governours determining of External Circumstances of Admission in the Worship of God, which are not only innocent in themselves, but also not set up in the place of, or justling out, anything commanded by God, nor yet imposed as the Commands of God. But who can have the Forehead to fasten such high Presumptions as these upon our Church? But I proceed,

Thirdly, As this Notion of Christian Liberty is an infringement of the Liberty which is left to Governours, so is it also greatly injurious to the Peoples Liberty: for it is a very highly to be priz'd Instance of the Peoples Liberty, that they may, without giving God an Offence, conform to such Laws as oblige them only to indifferent things. And it will be an intolerable straitning and confining of our Liberty, it will be a very Bondage to us, to be alwaies obnoxious to the Penalties which are the Sanctions of such Laws, and to other manifold Inconveniences that follow upon disobeying them.

Christian Liberty, according to this Notion, is so far from being worthy of our Saviour's purchasing, that 'tis infinitely more desirable to be without it, in regard of the extreemly-mischievous Consequences which follow upon quarrelling with Authority about harmless matters, which have not the least ill influence upon your Souls, where by not only those who refuse Obedience are exposed in their own Persons and Families to great Evils, both Temporal and Spiritual, but also the whole Community, the Church and State too, by their means. This we all know, at this day, by very sad Experience. This, I say, is such a Liberty as is the occasion of lamentable Mischiefs, both publick and private, but I am wholly to seek what Good can accrue thereby, and therefore we may safely warrant it to be no Liberty of our Blessed Saviour's procurement, but the contrary.

If we were well instructed in the Nature of the Gospel-Dispensation, we should be very certain, that whatsoever doth no way tend to the depraving of our Souls, and the bringing us into Bondage to Sin, (which we have proved to be the only Opposite to our grand Christian Liberty) cannot be unlawful to us Christians, because not prejudicial to the ultimate Design of the Gospel, which is the making us free from the

‘Dominion of Sin. To which Design we have shewed all the Precepts of our Saviour, the Promises and Threatnings, (and I may add Doctrines too) are subservient. And on the contrary, we may be as sure, that whatsoever is apt to hinder the promoting of this Design must needs be unlawful under the Gospel; as all that are not blind, or do not shut their Eyes, may easily see this same pretended Christian Liberty most sadly doth.

‘And there is nothing more apparent, than that Obedience to Authority, in all things not forbidden by the Divine Laws, doth mightily tend to the promoting Peace, Love, Humility, Self-denial, and the like Christian Virtues: But Disobedience in such matters doth as much occasion the gratifying of those Devilish Lusts, Pride, Uncharitableness, Contention, Wrath, Sedition, &c.

‘Fourthly, Those that pretend it to be such a Violation of Christian Liberty, to be obliged by Mens Laws to things indifferent, if they will be true to themselves and their own Principles, must not only refuse Obedience to the Injunctions of such things, but to the Prohibitions also of such things; as they must not do such as are commanded to be done, so they must do such as are commanded to be forboren; for it is as great an infringement of our Liberty to have indifferent things forbidden us, as to have them impos’d upon us: ’Tis a no less intrenchment upon it, to be tied up from what we may, antecedently to the Magistrate’s Authority, do, as to be commanded what we may omit.

‘So that if the things which the Dissenters now Refuse to do, because Commanded, should hereafter be Forbidden by Authority, they would be obliged, in order to the Maintenance of their Christian Liberty, to be every whit as zealous for them as now they are against them: Nor were they so honest as they should have been, but false to this their Principle, and shamefully betray’d their Liberty, in so patiently submitting, when time was, to the severe prohibition of the same things, tho’ it was by an usurped Power too.

‘What a strange Liberty is this, which, in its natural consequences tends to make People so Humoursome, Cross grain’d, and Opposite to Government! Surely it can’t be Christian, but the most Unchristian Liberty.

‘If this Free dealing should offend any, I should be sorry for it, but must withal take Leave to tell the Offended, that it is an Evidence of exceeding great Weakness, not to say worse, to be Angry with those who endeavour in the Spirit of Meekness to convince us of our dangerous Mistakes. But such is the Fate of Conscientious opposing Popular and Prevailing Errors, that it seldom meeteth with better Success than kindling the Passions, and sharpening the Tongues (and Pens too)

of

* of those who are most obliged to be thankful for it. But *Wisdom is justified of her Children.*

What Answer can be returned to this Discourse I cannot see ; but if, notwithstanding all that can be said, these Men will still persist in it, as their modest and humble Opinion that the Bishop, and all the most learned Men of the Christian World are mistaken, and that, let them say what they please, they do believe it to be really true, that nothing is to be done in the Worship of God, but what he himself hath expressly Commanded ; then I must ask, how they come so sharply to accuse Us of the breach of it, with whom the *Cross* and *Surplice* are no parts of the Worship of God, when the charge falls as heavy, if not much more heavy upon themselves ; who not only sprinkle in Baptism, and sit at the Lords Supper without any Command, but sing their Preachers Hymns to the Praise and Glory of God ; and who worship God in a conceived Prayer of their own Invention, to the utter Exclusion of that Prayer, which our Saviour in express words hath taught them *when they Pray, to say*, Luke 11. 2. where it is delivered upon a quite different Occasion from that in the other Gospel. St. *Matthew* indeed brings in our Saviour delivering this ~~Prayer~~, as a Pattern to square ours by ; but St. *Luke* as an express Form of Words, which when we pray, we are punctually to make use of. But strange as it is ! these Men, who would be thought the most sanctified Persons of the place they live in, will rather implicitly own themselves so wicked as not to be fit to use this Prayer, than admit of such an undeniable Argument as that is of the Lawfulness of a *set Form* which I must confess, I wonder this Man I am now dealing with, took no Notice of. But I conclude from his silence herein, that their real Opinion is, that those Invectives which they so commonly use against Forms of Prayer in general, and ours in particular, are only fit to amuse ignorant people with, and not well enough grounded to be openly defended, though they help to keep up a Party. Since therefore he durst say nothing about this, I pass it by, and if there be any well-meaning people among you, that are dissatisfied therein, I refer you to those two unanswerable Treatises writ by Dr. *Scott* in Vindication of publick Forms, and to Dr. *Beveridges* Sermon upon that Subject, to convince you of the *Usefulness and Excellency of our Common Prayer*. That which gave me Occasion to mention this, was the instances I pitched upon to shew, that you not only used things in the Worship of God without the Command of God ; but that (swerving from the Example of the Jews, whose doing as the *Lord commanded* Moses you so much insist upon) you omit that which Christ himself particularly prescribed in the Worship of God. How highly absurd therefore is it for any one to object that to another, of which he himself is no less guilty ; nay much more, when besides what I have already urged, it is done with this dis-

advan-

advantage of Inequality; that the Inferior who owes a deference to Authority in things doubtful and indifereat, seems to obtrude upon the Superior that which he would not have the Superior to impose upon him. There is yet one thing more which I would gladly know of you who speak so much of doing nothing about the Worship of God but what Christ hath commanded, and it is this: What Law of Christ is there which enjoyns you to hold your Meetings *just then* when the publick Service of God established by Law is performed? This is neither the Law of Christ, nor the Practice of a great many of your Brethren in other places; nor can you assign any truer reason for it, than that you are not content to enjoy your own way of Worshipping God, but you must also undermine, and subvert ours; which you are obliged to joy in, though not under the Penalty of the Law, yet in point of Conscience and in Obedience to the preceptive part of it.

Upon the same Accounts likewise you are as guilty of *Will-worship* as we are, granting it to be true that to *bring any thing of our own Invention into the service of God be Will-worship.*

But this being a word that you often make use of, especially in your Calumniating of us, I will venture to give you the Meaning of it, that you may both understand it, and know how rightly to apply it. This word is not used above once in the whole Bible, and that by St. Paul, Col. 2. 23. and therefore he must be his own Interpreter, and we must fetch the Meaning of the Expression from the Matter wherewith it is connected. If you look a little back in that Chapter, you will find the Apostle forbids worshipping of Angels, *verse 18*, and then he speaks against such superstitious people, as made it unlawful to Marry, to eat some kind of Meats, to touch or come near some things, none of which God hath made sinful, but they were the meer Commandments of Men, *verse 21*, 22. Now those that were of this Humour he immediately after, *ver. 23.* charges with *Will-worship*. So that according to the Judgement of the Learned (which I hope I may have the Liberty of quoting as well as my Antagonist.) A *Will-worship* is erected, when either the Worship due to God is given to a Creature, or when any thing is so enjoyned to be done, or not to be done, as if it were the Will and Commandment of God, when it is a meer Constitution of the Will of Man.

Having now found out what *Will-worship* is, let us impartially examine who are most guilty of it, You or We. And because I may be thought partial in this Enquiry, or however not duly qualified to make it, let the learned Man (now a Reverend Father of our Church) that assisted us in finding out the Meaning of *Will-worship*, state the Case betwixt us, and let us on both sides rest satisfied in his Determination. He is speaking to a Person of the same Kidney with the Man that has engaged me in all this trouble, and thus discourses him.

Friendly Deb. 'I am sure you will not make us guilty of the first sort of *Will-worship*, part 1. p 93. 'because none are more against it than we. As for the second, Our Church

Church hath declared to all the World, that none of those things you
 boggle at, are imposed under the Notion of necessary, or religious
 in themselves, or as commanded by God ; but are of an Indifferent Na-
 ture, and only used as decent and comely in the Judgment of the pre-
 sent Governours, who can alter these things, and constitute some-
 thing else in their room, if they see it fit ; which they could not pretend
 to, did they think them necessary. But then, as our Church is not
 guilty of Will-worship in the Apostles sense ; so, on the other side I
 know not how to excuse those from that very guilt, who oppose what
 is ordained among us as unlawful, and forbid us to use those Rites and
 Orders, because sinful things. For they make that to be necessary
 to be forborn and left undone, which God hath not made so, but left
 indifferent ; and so they, in effect, condemn those as sinners whom
 God acquits from all blame. As those in the Apostles Discourse, said,
Touch not, Taste not, Handle not, so you say, Kneel not, Pray not by a
Form, Wear not a Surplice, &c. Now since you think (as those Men did)
 to please God by not doing those things which he hath no where for-
 bidden ; I do not see but you commit the very fault which the Apostle
 reproves, i. e. you make that necessary not to be done, (if we will be
 true Worshipers of God) which he hath not made necessary not to be
 done, but left us at Liberty to do it if we please. By which means you
 make a Religion of your own, and study to honour God by abstaining
 from these things, by which he never said that he was dishonoured.
 O that all tender Consciences would seriously consider this ; for they
 would soon discern that your Ministers by forbidding those things now
 in dispute, lay greater Burthens upon the Consciences of their Brethren,
 and clog them with more duties, than God hath laid upon them.
 Whereas we, who think those things may be done, lay no other Bur-
 then upon the Conscience than what God himself hath laid ; which is,
 to obey our Governours in all things, wherein he himself hath not bid-
 den us to do the contrary.

*Preface to the
 Com. Prayer.*

A N S W E R.

*I shall only touch of Additions in the Service Book, there are added three
 whole Verses to the Fourteenth Psalm, and one Verse to the Thirteenth
 Psalm.*

R E P L Y.

If it be granted, that there are those *Additions* he speaks of, yet it
 was not the Mistake of the Common Prayer Book, but of the Translati-
 ons which the Common Prayer followed, viz. the Septuagint and Vul-
 gar. But I wonder how he came to be so cautious as not to call these

Adds

Additions to Scripture, for that certainly was his meaning. The *Additions* to the 14th Psalm are accounted for in one of the old Bibles, by this Note; *That of this 14th Psalm, the 5th, 6th, and 7th Verses, which are put into the Common Translation, and may seem unto some to be left out in this, are not in the same Psalm in the Hebrew Text, but are rather put in more fully to express the manners of the wicked, and are gather'd out of the 5th, 140th, and 10th Psalms, the 59th of the Prophet Isaiah, and the 36th Psalm, and are alledged by St. Paul, and placed together in the 3d to the Romans.* But the saying, that there is a Verse added to the 14th Psalm, is a notorious Falshood; there are only these words, *I will praise the Name of the Lord most Highest*; which are in the seventh Psalm, and the last Verse.

What then can this Man be thought to mean? Would he insinuate, that these *Additions* are Inventions of our own, or that they are inserted by the Church, upon some wicked selfish design? I hope it appears that they were not, nor we, upon the score thereof, obnoxious to the Penalty of *Deut. 4. 2*, before quoted by him. But I would fain know, whether they are not deeply guilty of the Crime they charge us with, who teach, That nothing is to be used in the Worship of God, but what is prescribed by God himself; for if that be not a Scripture Truth, then what an Addition is this? Do not they who teach this for a Scripture-Rule and Precept, impose upon Mens Consciences as much as Papists, and like them and the *Pharisees* of old, teach the Traditions of Men for the Doctrines of God? Nay, is not this directly contrary to the Gospel itself, which tells us, that *Sin is the Transgression of a Law*; and that where there is no Law, there is no Transgression? And thus you all along see with how keen an edge those Weapons turn upon you, which you make use of in fighting against us.

1 John 3. 4.
Rom. 4. 15.

A N S W E R.

In a word, I may say of all the Ceremonies in the Service Book, as one of your own Church saith of the Succession of Church-Officers, and in particular that of Bishops: He tells us, That our English Bishops received their Orders in the Communion of the Church of Rome; and ergo they had as good Orders as any of the Church of Rome; they must needs be as good when they are the same: But 'tis but a weak Proof for the Succession of their Bishops, when they must go to Rome for it.

R E P L Y.

One would think it were high time for you to have done with this old Accusation of Popery, and that you should have more Prudence, than to give us Occasion to upbraid you, with your fawning upon, and sneaking

sneaking to it in the late Reign, while the Bishops and Clergy of our Church made such a brave and vigorous Defence against it, even to the hazard of their ALL. If indeed it be true, that our *Bishops received their Orders in the Church of Rome*, then his [*ergo*] is good, and the only good one he has made in this Paper, and the Argument is a good one against the Papists, and no *weak one* neither for the *Succession of Church-Officers* against you, if you pretend to impugn it; which if you do, it lies at your door to prove a failure in their *Succession*, since our *Bishops* are in possession of their Authority. He ought to have quoted his Author, for a Reason before mention'd. But, what if it be true, is therefore Episcopacy unlawful, or the *Succession of our Bishops* not good? He may as well argue, that the Water is not good, or comes not from the Fountain-head, because the Conduit thro' which it is convey'd is faulty. But since this Man questions the *Succession of our Bishops*, and upbraids us with having *our Orders from the Church of Rome*, it is but reasonable to demand, Whether your Preachers have any Orders at all? and if they have, Whence they had them, and thro' what Channel they were convey'd down to them; and whether you have any Arguments to urge for the Validity of *Their Orders*, which we cannot wish much more reason make use of to prove the Goodness of *Ours*? But we may see how far Envy and Malice will sometimes make People overshoot themselves. This Man, rather than not send forth his Bolt at our Bishops and Clergy, will strike at the whole Reformation, and call in Question the Validity of the Orders of all the Reformed Churches: of *Luther and Calvin* himself, nay, even the Authority of their own *Ambassadors*.

As for our Ceremonies, tho' they be superstitiously abused by the *Papists*, yet that is no Argument against the present use of them in the *Church of England*, who retains them not because they are of *Rome*, but of an Ancienter date than that now corrupted Church; and if they are therefore unlawful, because they are used by her, then every thing done in that Church is so, which, I suppose, you will not say. We only reformed from the Errors and Corruptions of that Church, and not from what was Apostolical, Primitive, and Innocent, because they used it. And whatever Opinion these People would have others entertain of them, yet their admired Mr. *Calvin* declares in express words, that *He would not have any Man think him so Austere, or bound up, as to forbid a Christian, without any Exception, to accommodate himself to the Papists in any Ceremony or Observance*; for, says he further, *it is not my Purpose to condemn any thing but what is clearly evil, and openly vicious*. But for a full Answer to all you Object against us upon this score, I refer you to the Case of Symbolizing with the Church of *Rome*, by Dr. *Fowler*, our present Bishop, where he quotes those very words of Mr. *Calvin*.

ANSWER.

Sir, we desire not Separation, but Reformation; for, I hope, we have all of us so tender a regard for the everlasting Salvation of our own Souls, that we shall endeavour to make choice of such a Minister as may be able to divide the Word of Truth aright, and give to every one their Portion in due season.

REPLY.

I have observed but very little Coherence in any part of this Paper, but I see none at all in this Clause; on the contrary, the very design of choosing another Minister is a Proof beyond denial of your *Desire of Separation*. Your *Reformation* was the drift of my Paper, and 'tis Non sense for you to retort it upon us, till you have given some better Proofs, that there are really such Faults in the Constitution of our Church, as ought to be amended. But if the *Reformation* you desire be as to Matters which you either have proved, or can prove, to be really evil, I doubt not but the next Convocation that sits will readily gratifie you herein; nay, I verily think that they would take away some of those Ceremonies you scruple, or however leave the Use of them to every ones liberty, as the Canons of 40 have done, *Bowing towards the East*; if you could secure them against the evil Consequences of unnecessary Alterations; or give them sufficient Grounds to believe that the *Dissenters* of this Kingdom would then *Unite in the Communion of the Church*; or that the major part of you, who are distinguish'd from the other Sects by the Name of *Presbyterians*, would thereupon come over thereto; or indeed, that such a Method of proceeding would not drive more out of the Church than it would bring in.

But if the *Reformation* you talk of be such as would maim, and wound at least, if not *Unchurch* us, or however lay us open to all manner of Confusion, it is unreasonable you should be complied with, and you do thereby plainly shew your *Desires* to be either after *Ascendancy* over us, or *Separation from us*. Of which another Evidence is, that you use no Endeavours to get your selves satisfied of the Lawfulness of joyning in our Worship. You only read Books, and hear Persons of one side. You are full of Prejudice against us, and are glad of any Pretence to separate from us. You cry out against the Common-prayer, but pray let me ask you, and answer it to your Consciences, Have you ever seriously and impartially read and examin'd that Book? Have you a desire to hold Communion with us, if you could perswade your selves that you might lawfully do it? Have you propos'd your Scruples to the Divines of our Church? or, Have you read what they have written in

in order to your satisfaction? If you have done all these things, then you have acted fairly. But then let me ask again, Have you met with any of your own Teachers, that are able to give a sufficient Answer to their Arguments? They may possibly put you off with Noise and Clamour instead of true Reason; but certain it is, they have none of them yet answer'd those excellent things that have been writ in the defence of our Church. If they think their Cause so good, and themselves able to defend it, let them try their Skill at Mr. *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, and the several Treatises writ by our Divines in the Reign of King *Charles the Second*, not above two of which were ever answer'd; but those Answers were Replied to, without ever a Rejoinder; some or all of which I would have those among you, that have Time and Capacities for it, to peruse, particularly those that I have already had, or shall have, occasion to mention or refer to, as also a *Perswasive to Communion with the Church of England*, by the late Bishop of *Chichester*; and *The Case of Indifferent Things*, by the present Bishop of that Diocese; *The Discourses about Conscience, and a Scrupulous Conscience*, by the present Archbishop of *York*, and Dr. *Calamy*, wherein you will be inform'd how far that Pretence will and will not bear you out in your Separation. Our Church is freed from the Imputation of Popery by Dr. *Hooper*, and all your Objections against the *Common-Prayer* answer'd by Dr. *Claggett* and Dr. *Comber*; which latter has largely and devoutly Explain'd and Paraphras'd upon every part of it. Mr. *Evans* has in two parts stated and resolv'd for you the Case of *Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament*. And several more Discourses there are, all writ with that Candour and Calmness, which, if you have leisure, is sufficient to invite you to peruse and consider them. And indeed one would wonder, that after so many excellent Tracts writ in vindication of our Church, there should be such a Person as a Dissenter in *England*. I have all or most of these things by me, and the Use of them is at the service of any of you, that will desire and accept of it; but you must put in practise the Advice of *Epictetus*, which is, to seek after Truth with the indifference of Travellers, who matter not whether their way be to the right or left, or forward, so that it lead them to their Journeys end.

A N S W E R.

Sir, as for your accusing us of Schism, the keeping it up in the Church of God, and rending and dividing the Body of Christ, and all for separating from those Errors the Church is guilty of, from which we have a Commandment to separate our selves; Come out from amongst them, saith the Lord, and touch not the Unclean thing, and I will receive you; now whether it be right to obey GOD or Man judge ye. Now, if you can make it appear that it is Schism to obey GOD rather than Man, and that

it's a rending and dividing the Body of Christ, when we contend but for the pure Administration of his Ordinances according to his own Appointment. Now if you can prove this, I will yield you the Cause.

R E P L Y.

Your saying that I accused you of Schism, the keeping is up in the Church of God, and rending and dividing the Body of Christ, is false, I did not positively charge you therewith. I signified to you the Guilt and Danger of that Crime, that you might take care not to incur either, by separating upon Humor or Prejudice, without just Grounds and Reasons.

And I was purposely thus cautious in expressing my self, that I might not baffle my own Design, by saying any thing that might disoblige or exasperate Persons whom I had some Grounds to suspect were self-will'd, and too inclinable to be soon angry; but since you will force me to speak out, I'll tell you my Mind freely; and because this Man seems to exult in vindicating you from that Charge, and lays it wholly upon us, I will endeavour to make it appear, that notwithstanding anything he has said, you are *Schismatics* still.

That therefore which I do say, and for which I have both good Reason and good Authority, is this, that so far as you withdraw your Communion from that Church (that I mean to which I invited you) with which you lawfully may, and with which therefore you ought to communicate, you cannot be excused from the Sin of *Schism*, at least as to the *Matter and Outward Act* of it; because, where ever there is an Actual Separation from a Church with which we ought, and with which we may lawfully communicate, there is an Actual Schism commenced, let the Pretence for the Separation be what it will. How far you are chargeable before God with the *formal Guilt* of Schism, I know not, I must leave that to your Consciences and the Searcher of Hearts, who knows whether your Separation be occasion'd through the fault of your Wills, or the weakness of your Understandings; whether through Passion, or Humor, or Interest, or from the misfortune of your Circumstances as to Education, or any other matter: I hope the best, and judge as charitably as I can, and that is as charitably as any Man living. This was, and this is still my real Opinion, and there is nothing said in your *Paper* to induce me to alter it; for, unless the Errors you separate from be such as make Communion absolutely unlawful, you can never produce a *Command* to withdraw your Communion from the National Church, where the Divine Providence hath placed you, and especially from that Church wherein you were born and baptiz'd. That 2 Cor. 6. 17, which you pretend as a *Command*, will not stand you in the least stead, till you have proved our Service to be

be Idolatrous, and we Unbelievers, of whom you will find that the Apostle speaks, if you will but look to v. 14, and as the Margin directs you to *Iſa. 52. 11*, whence these words are cited, where the Prophet bids the whole Body of the *Jews* to fly out of *Babylon*; and therefore it must be something worse than gross Ignorance to apply it to such a Separation as you are in.

I doubt not but the *Errors* (as you call them) mentioned in this Paper, are thought by you to be the greatest of any in our Church, and yet even these have been abundantly vindicated from that Imputation; and Christ's own *Ordinances* are purely *Administred* by us, according to his own Institution, without any such Defect or Addition, as alters their Nature, and destroys their Virtue. And what purer *Administrations* and *Ordinances* Men would have, than those of our Saviour's own Institution, without any corrupt and sinful Mixtures to spoil their Virtue and Efficacy, I cannot tell; nor durst this Man positively say in his Paper, that Christ's *Ordinances* are not thus purely *Administred* by us, notwithstanding his sly and malicious Insinuation to the contrary. But granting, that in the *Administration of Christ's Ordinances* there be some particular Modes and Rites accompanying them, which are not commanded in the Gospel; if they are such as do not destroy the Efficacy, or alter the Nature of the *Ordinance*, they cannot be pretended unlawful, or the *Ordinance* ever the less purely *Administred*, because the *Unlawfulness* of any thing depends upon its being forbidden, and the *Parity of Divine Administrations* upon their Agreement with the Institution.

Thus the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administred exactly according to the Institution of our Blessed Saviour, and because it is the most solemn part of Christian Worship, and deliver'd to the Receiver with a most devout and affectionate Prayer, that the *Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given and shed for him*, may preserve his *Body and Soul unto Everlasting Life*, and therefore requires the utmost Devotion and Reverence of both Soul and Body; it is order'd to be received kneeling. Thus also is Baptism purely Administred, and after the Person is baptized, and solemnly received into Christ's Church, he is signed with the Sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, but manfully to fight under his Banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil, and continue Christ's faithful Soldier and Servant unto his Life's end. And at the Baptism of Infants, Persons are deputed by the Parents, explicitly in the Infant's Name, to make that Vow and Stipulation which those who allow of their Baptism must however suppose to be tacitly and implicitly made by them; and also to give Collateral Security to the Church for the Religious Education of the Infant; the design of which Institution was, to provide against the Remissness or Mortality of the Parents, whose Obligation

gation to breed up their Children in the Fear of God is never the less, but is, on the contrary, thought to be already so great, by the Laws of Nature and Religion, that they themselves cannot be more strictly bound. It is indeed to be lamented, that the Regard to this Appointment is not answerable to the Piety and Excellency of its design, but it ought to be consider'd, that that is the fault of the Men, and not of the Constitution, and that those who object against it upon this score may themselves help to remedy it. Now if, when Christ's Ordinances are thus purely Administred, it be not a rending and dividing the Body of Christ, so highly to contend for such Modes of Administration, which are not more Scriptural, but only more agreeable to their own Fancies, as to separate from, and break the Peace of Christ's Church; if, I say, this be not a rending the Body of Christ, I know not by what Name to call it, and I believe my Opponent will be hard put to it to give it a more proper one.

But allowing that those you insist upon be Errors; Are they fundamental ones? Are they destructive of true Christian Faith and Practice? Did I not know the Power of Passion and Prejudice, I durst be confident you will say they are not; but, however, I positively assert they are not, and desire all the Dissenters in England to prove that they are. If they are not, then your own Writers shall instruct you in your Duty. Private Brethren, says Mr. Noys, may not separate from Churches, and Church Ordinances, which are not fundamentally defective neither in Doctrine or Manners, Heresie or Profaneness. Dr. Owen asserts, That many Errors in Doctrine, Disorders in sacred Administrations, irregular walking in Conversation, with neglect and abuse of Discipline in Rulers, may fall out in some Churches, and yet not evacuate their Church-State, or give sufficient warrant to leave their Communion, and separate from them. Mr. Cotton saith, Unless you find in the Church Blasphemy, or Idolatry, or Persecution, (i. e. such as forces them to leave the Communion) there is no just Ground of Separation. Observe, saith Mr. Baxter, (in his Catalogue of the Faults of nine Churches in Scripture) that no one Member is in all these Scriptures, or any other, commanded to come out and separate from any of all these Churches, as if their Communion in Worship were unlawful: And therefore before you separate from any, as judging Communion with them unlawful, be sure that you bring greater Reasons than any of these recited, were. And this Advice he gives to his Brethren, Teach them to know that all Men are imperfect and faulty, and so is all Mens Worship of God; and that he that will not communicate with faulty Worship must renounce Communion with all the World, and all with him. Mr. Calvin assigns two Marks of the visible Church, the Word of God truly preached, and Sacraments administred according to Christ's Institution; and saith, That altho' there be many Faults and Corruptions in such a Church, yet as long as it retains those Marks, Separation from it is not justifiable; nay, altho' some of those Faults be about Preaching the Word,

and

and Administrations of Sacraments; for saith he, *all Truths are not of equal Moment; but as long as the Doctrine according to Godliness, and the true Use of the Sacraments is kept up: Men ought not to separate upon lesser Differences; but they ought to seek the amending what is amiss, continuing in the Communion of the Church, and without disturbing the Peace and Order of it.*

I had not, I own, the Opportunity of consulting every one of these Authors; but I have given you their sense and very words upon the unquestionable Authority of those two Reverend Bishops of our Church, the present Bishop of Worcester, and the Bishop of Chichester. The former whereof, in his *Unreasonableness of Separation*, hath with great Evidence proved, that all the Old Non-conformists did think themselves bound in Conscience to communicate with the Church of England, and did look upon Separation from it to be a sin, notwithstanding the Corruptions they supposed to be in it. And the latter, in his *Case of Lay-Communion*, produces the concurrent Testimony of the most eminent Non-conformists, that there is nothing required in the Parochial Communion of the Church of England, that can be a sufficient reason for Separation from it; and though he has collected the sense of a great many, yet you may believe him, when he tells you, that for *One Hundred*, he could easily have produced *Two*, if the Cause were to go by the Poll. These Reverend Authors do not put their Readers off with only telling 'em, that the Learned observe, and some Authors say so and so; but they quote Book and Page, and which therefore, if you have a Mind to be further satisfied, you your Selves may consult. Those Non-conforming Ministers might probably be under such Prior Engagements, or dislike some things so far, that they could not satisfy themselves in making the Declarations and Subscriptions which are required of Ministers, in order to preserve the Peace of the Church, and the unity of Christians, which does so much depend upon that of its Officers and Teachers. But there being no Declarations or Subscriptions required of the People, nor any thing more, than to attend upon, and joyn in the Worship practised and allowed in the Church, they, according to the Doctrine of those Gentlemen, ought not to separate. To which I shall not need to add any more, than that remarkable Annotation of the Reverend Mr. Pool, upon Luke 2. 41. *One thing, says He, there is observable: The Pharisees and Scribes and Priests had in those days much corrupted the Worship of God by their Traditions, yet they retained the Substance of Gods Institutions: We find both our Saviour and his Disciples, and other people of God not wholly forsaking the Jewish Church because of its Corruptions: Yet we cannot think they joyned with them in any thing of their Will-worship; from whence we may learn a tenderness as to a total Separation from a Church, and the Lawfulness of attending divine Ministrations, though attended with Usages which we approve not, provided there be no Idolatry in the Service.*

And

And the Truth of it is, if Separation be justifiable, upon the Score of some small (whether real or fancied) Errors, which may be in any Church, then Communion must not be held with any part of Christ's Church if not with ours; for she is certainly as free from Error as any Church in the whole World, and the living in her Communion, like Members of so Holy an Institution, as safe a way to Salvation as any I know in the world. And I so firmly believe what I say in this matter, that I challenge all her Adversaries to Compare ours, and other Churches with the word of God, and the Primitive Church; and if they cannot produce one that is freer from Error in Doctrine and Worship, than she is, or comes nearer to the Primitive Pattern; nay, if amongst all Competitions and contending Sects among us, there is not one to be found, that delivers the Truths of the Gospel with greater purity and sincerity: That doth teach a Religion more holy and useful; that lays greater stress upon a pure Mind, and a blameless and undefiled Life; that doth give more forcible Arguments for Vertue, or more powerful Dissuasives from Vice; then I hope you will have better thoughts both of her, and my Invitation of you into her Communion; and be convinced that you have no just grounds to continue in your Separation, upon Pretences of Impurity in her, or greater Purity elsewhere.

But I would have you speak out: Is Communion with us sinful, or is it not? If you say it is, you say it without Proof; you therein contradict the Opinion of the most eminent of the old Presbyterians; you oppose your selves to the Opinion and Practice of the most candid and most honest among those now alive, who do not wholly separate themselves from our Communion; and if your own Teaches will be true to their real Sentiments, I dare be confident, they will not say so; nay, you do herein condemn your own Practice of occasionally joyning with us now; and unless you will declare, you were then mistaken in your Judgments, you make your selves guilty of base Hypocrisie in constantly joyning with us, when the Penalties of the Law were inflicted upon those that refused it. If you say that Communion with us is not sinful, and that therefore you may occasionally joyn with us; then let the Assembly of Divines draw the Consequence; who say, that to separate from

Misob. of Sep. those Churches ordinarily and visiblv, with whom occasionally you may joyn without sin, seemeth to be a most unjust Separation.
p. 20.

That which you quote for *Our*, I have shewed to be no Command for you to leave our Church; nor can you make it any way applicable thereto, till you have proved that there is something taught or practised in our Church, which is as bad as the *unclean thing*, there spoken of. But did I, or ever any Man else say that it was *Schism* to obey God rather than Man? And therefore what need he put me to prove it? But that is not your Case, my Brethren, you causelessly and willfully separate from a sound part of Christ's Church, and if that is not *Schism*, I will yield
up

up the cause for ever. But let us more particularly examine this main Motion of Schism, and see whether, even according thereto, you be not guilty of it.

A N S W E R.

I know Schism properly signifies a Cutting in two, a disagreeing in Matters, a Division in the Church of Christ, consisting in an Unity in matters of Faith, so that they are truly Schismaticks that are divided from the External Communion of the true Church, viz, that do not own all the Ordinances of the true Church, or if they own them, do not live in the Exercise of them, these are the Persons that are guilty of Schism. Now how deeply guilty of Schism you are who charge us with it, I shall leave all honest Men to judge. Now if you cannot prove that we own any thing in point of Doctrine or Discipline in our Church that is not according to the word of God, how can you have the face to accuse us of Schism? If you have any thing to Accuse us of in point of Doctrine or Discipline let us have it, and I doubt not but we shall be able to clear our selves of all your false Accusations.

R E P L Y.

Schism he knows not well what to make of; he gives me the usual signification of the word it is true, but when he comes to apply it, he says 'tis a Division in the Church of Christ consisting in an Unity in matters of Faith; either as if the Unity of the Church consisted only in an Unity in matters of Faith, or that Schism were a Separation from the true Church in matters of Faith: But besides Unity in matters of Faith there is an Unity and Communion of Saints in Worship; and whether he knew it or no, if he separates from the true Church in Matters of Faith, he is an Heretick more properly than a Schismatick; for a Man may be a Schismatick, and yet be right as to the main Articles of Faith. If he is divided from the external Communion of the true Church, he is a Schismatick; or to explain it in other words, if he does not own all the Ordinances of the true Church, or if he does own them, does not, however, live in the exercise of them, viz in the external Communion of the true Church, this person is guilty of Schism.

Now I leave all men that have sence, as well as honesty, to Judge, whether you or we are divided from the External Communion of the true Church, and consequently which are Schismaticks. We own all the Ordinances of the true Church, and live in the Exercise of them. We are in Communion with all the sound parts of Christ's Church all the world over. They own our Church as their Sister, and give her the right hand of Fellowship, and highly condemn you for your separation. The Church of Rome only accuses us of Schism, and the Charge would be good against ours with respect to her, if we had no better reasons for separating from her, than the Dissenters in England give for their Separation from us. Our Separation from the Church of Rome has been sufficiently cleared from the Charge of Schism, and when you have brought as good Arguments, in defence of your dividing from External Communion with us, we shall then pronounce you not guilty of

it neither. But, till then, till you prove that ours is not the National Established Church, with which you lie under an Obligation to Communicate; that this established Church is not a sound part of the Church of Christ, and that she imposes sinful Terms of Communion; till I say, you have done all this; I shall continue my Accusation of Schism, as long as you continue in your Separation; and put as good a Face upon it, as the Godly Learned of old did; who say, 'That every unjust and rash

Friendly Deb. 'Separation from a true Church (i. e. when there is no just, or at least
part 1. p. 166. 'no sufficient cause of the Separation) is a Schism, and that there is
'a Negative and a Positive Schism. The former is, when Men do
'peaceably and quietly draw from Communion with a Church, not making head against that Church, from which they are departed: The
'other is, when Persons so withdrawing do consociate and withdraw
'themselves into a distinct opposite Body, setting up Church against
'Church; which *Camero* calls a Schism by way of Eminency: and farther
'is, there are four Causes that makes a Separation from a Church,
'ice; 1. First, when they that separate are grievously and intollera-
'bly persecuted: Secondly, when the Church they separate from is
'Heretical: Thirdly, when it is idolatrous: Fourthly, when 'tis the
'Seat of Anti-Christ. And where none of these four are found, there
'the Separation is insufficient, and Schism. Now we are fully assured,
'that none of these Four Causes can be justly charged upon our Congre-
'gations, therefore you must not be displeased with us, but with your
'selves, if we blame you as guilty of positive Schism. This was the
Presbyterian Doctrine in those Blessed Days of 49, to those who stood
in divided Congregations from them: And, if it was good Doctrine
then, I am sure it is much more so now, as coming from Us to You.

In what sence you call your *separate Meetings a Church*, I know not; but if you think that they deserve that Name more than the Quakers, or Anabaptists, or Independants, who all assume that Title to themselves, then I must tell you that I take your Church to be a Schismatical Church; for let your Faith be as right as that of the 3 Creeds, and your Discipline (if you have any) as free from fault, as you would have the world think you to be; yet if you are divided from the external Communion of the true Church, in the exercise of the Ordinances of the true Church, i. e. if you do not joyn with the true Church in Prayers, hearing the Word, and receiving the Sacraments, your own Paper makes you *Schismatics*; and I must freely own, I do not see how any Man can be acquitted therefrom, who being a Member of a particular established Church, does, upon any pretended Offence taken against such Rites, Modes and Ceremonies, (which are thought convenient by that Church) separate himself from the publick Worship, when the *Substantials* and *Essentials* thereof are so unexceptionable as ours are.

But forasmuch as your Notions and Discourses about the true Church, and about Schism, seem to be so confused and extravagant: Before I dis-

miss

miss this point, I desire you will give me Liberty to instruct you in the meaning of a Christian Church, which I am apt to believe you do not rightly understand.

Now, among the several Acceptations of the word Church (one whereof belongs to the place consecrated and set apart for the publick Assemblies of Christians) the Church in the Language of the New Testament (of Intelligent Writers, and indeed of all Men that understand themselves, when they talk about it, especially with Reference to Communion) doth generally signify the Christian Church, either as it is Catholick, or as it is Particular.

The Christian Church, considered as Catholick or Universal, signifies the whole Body of Christians, dispersed upon the Face of the whole Earth; and so it comprehends all Persons, and all particular Churches professing Christianity. And whosoever shall make a Defection, or Separation from this Church will be found guilty of a manifest, dangerous and most abominable Schism, or rather Apostacy.

This general and Universal Church, tho' but one body, is yet made up of several particular Members, or Churches; and by a particular Christian Church, we understand a Number of Men, of the same Country, professing Christianity, formed into a Society under lawful Governments, and governed by such Laws and Rules as are not different from, but agreeable to the Laws and Rules of the Catholick Church. And if any Man, or number of Men, who are Members of that Society, shall, without just cause separate themselves from the Communion thereof, he or they so doing, are certainly guilty of Schism. Such a Church as this, was the Church at Corinth, the Church at Jerusalem, the Church at Ephesus, the Church of the Thessalonians, the Church of Laodicea, the Church of Smyrna, the Church of Pergamus, the Church of Thyatira, the Church of Sardis, the Church of Philadelphia; and such a Church as this is the National Established Church of England, which though a Collection of several Parochial Congregations, is yet properly but one particular Church, by reason of the same bond of Faith, Worship and Government, whereby they are all United, and so make one, true, sound, and pure part of the Catholick or Universal Church. Except then, there be a more just cause of Separation than you either have alledged, or can alledge, it must be a very great sin to erect new Churches, and separate in the Acts of Prayer and Sacraments from the Body of a Church and Nation. For so at Corinth St. Paul told them, whilst one was for Paul, and another for Apollos, and there were divisions among them, they were Carnal, and walked as Men, 1 Cor. 3. 34. And at Rome he bids them mark them who cause Divisions and Offences, and not adhere and associate with, but avoid them, Rom. 16. 17. or to enforce this in the words of the Presbyterians, whereby they of old pleaded for Unity and Uniformity, *We are loth to speak any thing that may offend you, yet we entreat you to consider, that if the Apostle call those Divisions of the Church*

Friend. Deb.
par. 1. p. 165.

21. 10. 11.

of Corinth, (wherein Christians did not separate into diverse formed Congregations of several Communion, in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper) Schism, 1 Cor. i. 10. may not your secession from us, and professing you cannot joyn with us as Members, and setting up Congregations of another Communion, be more properly called Schism?

And I must tell you further, that it is never the less so in you, upon the Account of the Act of Toleration, which cannot, nor does not pretend to exempt you from the Duty of Conformity, but only from the Penalties of Nonconformity. Your Separation is not one jot the more reasonable, or more just than it was before; and those that were concerned in the drawing up of this Paper seem to be sensible of this, in that they do not urge the Plea of Toleration, but put their cause upon another Issue, viz. the Merits of it. But however, Mr. Norris has cleared this case, in his *Charge of Schism continued, notwithstanding the Toleration.*

And now that I may be even with my Gentleman for his *Idol-syllogism*, I sh^d. Sum this whole Matter in a Syllogism; all the parts whereof have been sufficiently proved to be as true, as that was proved to be false; and it runs thus, *Whoever separate from a Church, with which they may lawfully communicate, are guilty of Schism:*

But you separate from a Church, with which you may lawfully communicate;

Therefore you are guilty of Schism.

Or if you would rather that I should put the Argument into form, in your own Words, it stands thus,

Whoever are divided from the external Communion of the true Church are Schismatics.

But you are divided from the external Communion of the true Church;

Therefore you are Schismatics.

The Major or first of these Propositions is your own.

The Minor or second Proposition, is true also, because it is undeniable that the Church of England is a true Church, and too sadly apparent, that you separate from external Communion with her in the Exercise of Prayers and Sacraments, the Ordinances of the true Church; whence the Conclusion necessarily follows, that you are Schismatics.

And if so, then I beseech you lay to Heart the words of Mr. Ball, one of the most learned and judicious Non-conformists before the Wars, as Dr. Stillingfleet styles him in his *Mischief of Separation*, where he quotes him for them, speaking of Separation, he calls it, *a Renting the Church, the Disgrace of Religion, the Advancement of Pride, Schism and Contention, the Offence of the Weak, the Grief of the Godly who be better settled, the Hardning of the Wicked, and Recovery or Rising again of Anti-Christiansm; nay, even persecuting the Lord Jesus in his Host, which they revile; in his Ordinances which they dishonour; and in his Servants, whose Footsteps they slander, whose Graces they Despise, whose Office they Trample upon with Disdain.*

A N;

ANSWER.

And I hope God will so direct us in Choosing our Minister that we shall make choice of such a one as will endeavour to keep within the Bounds and Limits of the Laws of God and Man, and in particular the Act of Toleration, and one I hope that will give no Disturbance in the Parish, unless you will be disturbed, as I fear you are and have been for the Preaching of the Gospel; you know such Men there were in the Apostles days, these Men say they do exceedingly trouble our City, you know who they were that were accused, those who were the Faithful Ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

REPLY.

I did not desire you to take care in the choice of a Minister, there is no Room for that as long as I live, and I am not legally dispossessed. But if you must have another Preacher, who, in your Judgements, is better qualified than I am, I wish still that he may be a Man of Prudence and Temper, one that will strictly confine himself within the Bounds and Limits of the Act of Toleration, which restrains him wholly to the Meeting-House where he is licenced, in the Exercise of his Talent of Preaching; gives him no Indulgence to perform any other Ministerial Office either there, or in any other place; nor to Rail, and Revile, or speak against the Church and Common Prayer, either in his Sermons, or elsewhere; nor to go about to seduce People from the Established Service, and their own Proper Minister. There is no Toleration that I know of for these and the like Practises to either him or any other, and therefore I think it is good and kind Advice both to you and him, to keep within the Bounds of that Act, for fear an Enquiry should be made, whether all such, who do not observe the Conditions of the Indulgence, be not as liable to the Law as if they had none.

But let him be as cautious as he will, not to transgress that particular Law, he must not pretend that he observes *all the Laws of God and Man*, if he sets up *Altar against Altar*, Church against Church, and Heads a Separation from the external Communion of the true Church of Christ; and be he who he will, and let his Pretence be what it will, if he sets himself here in Opposition to me, and that true Church of which I am a lawful Minister, I must say of him that *he does exceedingly trouble our City*; and that too by Teaching Customs which are not lawful for us to Receive neither to observe, being Members of the Church of England; for if any Man i Cor. 11. 16. seem to be contentious, we have no such Custom, nor the Churches of God; from whence we may (by the way) observe, that the Apostle disputing, concerning an Ecclesiastick Ceremony, with the Corinthian Church, appeals to the Custom of the Churches of God, as sufficient to confute even the most contentious, without any express Determination of the word of God, in matters of that Nature. I know very well who they were that said *these men do exceedingly trouble our City*, and of whom they spake it, and upon what Principle they spake it; and I know that your Application of it to me is not Parallel in any of these; but I am sure that
the

the Expression, as applied by me, is, as to the matter of Fact, true ; and I know further that they were the Children of *Edom*, that cryed out upon *Jerusalem*, *Down with it, Down with it, even to the Ground.*

It is, I do own, a daring and provoking piece of Impudence to have a Company of *Uzziah's* (unto whom it appertaineth not to burn Incense unto the Lord, but to the Priests the Sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn Incense) compared with the Holy Apostles of our Blessed Saviour, who gave such undeniable Proof of the Divinity of their Commission. And a good Man cannot but be troubled at the Injustice and Confusion of breaking in upon sacred Rights, and invading Holy Offices : But however I do assure you, that having (as I hope) now discharged my Duty to the full in this particular, I shall give no farther Disturbance to my self, than to lament our Divisions, and beseech God to compose them, and to take what care I can to secure the Rights and Privileges, which do yet belong to the Church and Minister of this Parish, from being either withheld or encroached upon. And this, as it is all the Disturbance or indeed Incivility that I have offered you (notwithstanding sufficient Provocation) during the time that I have been in this place ; so need you not be apprehensive of any other from me for the future. Only forgive me that Wrong, and give me leave to maintain my Fidelity to the Church ; to be firm to my Subscriptions and my Vows of Ordination ; constantly to use and (as well as I am able) to defend that *Liturgy*, which I have solemnly testified my Approbation of, in the Presence of God, and in the face of his congregation. Pardon me in these things, and excuse me that I am resolutely bent not to sink beneath the Dignity of my Function, and the Station I am in ; and you may depend (according to the Opportunities you give me of performing them) upon all the good Offices which can reasonably be expected, from either a good Neighbour, a charitable Christian, or an honest Minister.

A N S W E R.

Sir, You charge us with causing Divisions among us, by bringing in another Preacher ; as if the Preaching the Gospel by the Authoriz'd Ambassadors of God were the only Cause, when, alas ! you do not consider it's the un-
lawful Impositions, Superstitions, Traditions, that is the principal Cause of those Divisions that are among us ; for till those are removed, we cannot be united.

R E P L Y.

And notwithstanding this impertinent Cant, I say still, that the bringing in another Preacher does, and will maintain the Divisions among us ; and further, that such Preachers are the main, if not the only true Causes of them, thro' the just Judgment of God upon a sinful People, who have not lived answerably to their holy Profession, and that Excellent Church which God in wonderful Mercy, and by miraculous Providences, hath established and preserved among us. And I shall alwaies be of that Opinion, till it is proved, that those Men are Ambassadors authorized by
God

God to preach the Gospel in this Nation ; and that there are any *unlawful Impositions, Superstitions, and Traditions* in our Church, which are a just cause for the People to forsake their own Pastors, and give themselves up to the guidance of those Intruders.

And this is a sufficient Reply to his complemental Conclusion with the false *Accusation of Unlawful Impositions, Superstitions, and Traditions* ; clamorous Phrases, which every ignorant Wretch can make use of when he has a mind to reproach our Church. Methinks it would have been but fair dealing to have made good this Charge, by shewing what *Unlawful things* we impose, wherein we are *superstitious*, and by what *Traditions* we make the Word of God of none effect : But he knows, that to cry out against any Man of a different Opinion, is enough to raise the whole *Discontented Party* against him.

If he thinks he has given sufficient Proof of *Unlawful Impositions* in our Church, I think I have proved he has not ; and in reference to whatsoever is imposed upon us, meerly by the Churches Authority, I shall only further say, That none of the things imposed are Unlawful in themselves ; that to abridge Authority in the exercise of their Power in things of a middle nature, that are of themselves indifferent, and neither simply good or evil, is to cancel and make Authority useless, because their Power lies mainly in things of that nature, since things that are simply and absolutely good are commanded by God himself, and things that are in themselves evil forbidden by him ; that if, where some are impower'd to give Orders, others are not under an Obligation to observe them, Authority is nugatory and ridiculous ; and, that before these latter days there were never any *Christians* in the World that held themselves bound not to do a lawful thing, meerly because it was commanded and imposed upon them ; which makes Obedience and Observance of those things a *Duty* in us, which before they were clothed with a particular and punctual Command, were no ways obligatory.

What this Man means by *Traditions* I can hardly guess. As for *Traditions* about Matters of Doctrine, we hold none, but those which are deliver'd to us in the Writings of the Penmen of Holy Writ ; and for the proof of the Authority of those Sacred Books, we look upon the written *Tradition* of the Church to be a good Argument. If by *Traditions* he means the *Customs and Ceremonies* of the Church, then they have already been consider'd as far as he gave me occasion to do it. And I shall only add, that I do believe what the Church of England declares in the 34th Article of her Religion, That *whosoever, thro' his private Judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the Traditions (i. e. Customs) and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be Ordained and Approved by Common Authority, ought to be rebuked openly, &c.*

As to the Charge of *Superstition*, it will most certainly fall where that of *Wilt-worship* did ; and the same Instances prove you as guilty of the

Presb. of Scotland.

*Enquiry into
the new Opin-
ion, &c. by
A. M. D. D.
P. 295.*

p. 305.

p. 307.

*Fr. Dis. par 1,
P. 95.*

one as the other. What this Man's Notion of *Superstition* is I cannot tell, but (to use the Words of a judicious Author in this case) 'I look upon the Men of his Way to be the most superstitious People upon Earth; they declaim against things in their own nature innocent and useful, as if they were forbidden by God. When we represent to our selves the Deity, as one that is pleased with the imaginary Notions that we groundlessly entertain of things, this is the Superstition that poysons the Soul and all its Faculties. When we say, that such a thing is forbidden by God, only because we forbid it our selves, this is to teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men; but to regulate Actions that are indifferent in their nature, according to the prudent determination of our Superiors, cannot fall under that Censure, else all Societies, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, must be involved in the Guilt. When we say things are unlawful that are not unlawful, when we prefer Human Institutions to the Commandments of God, when we overvalue things beyond their own Nature, Dignity, and Order in which God hath placed them; when we esteem the Means more than the End, and separate the Ecclesiastical Laws from their Relation and Subserviency to the Laws of God; when our Thoughts and Notions of things are so confus'd, that we mistake their subordination one unto another, and practise according to such Notions; then we put light for darkness, and darkness for light. Our best Performances must needs be tainted with Folly and Superstition, and we worship God not according to the dictates of true Reason or Revelation, but according to the dark Idea which we form to our selves: This is Superstition in its true colours. Superstition is a piece of blind Service, and therefore unacceptable; a Bastard-kind of Worship, that proceeds from Pusillanimity and Unreasonable Fear. If we struggle for the Opinions and Fancies that are but of yesterday, in opposition to the Doctrine and Practices of the *Catholic Church*, we believe our selves rather than the Gospel, we are superstitious in the strictest Notion; and to set up our own Decrees against the Suffrage of so many Ages, is Arrogance and Vanity in the highest sense.

Or, in shorter and perhaps plainer terms, Superstition is a needless Fear in matters of Religion, which makes a Man either not dare to do those things which he hath a liberty to do, or think he must upon pain of Damnation do those things which he may as well let alone.

So that, if either all, or any part of this be a right Account of *Superstition*, we are as free therefrom as from *Unlawful Impositions* and *Unjustifiable Traditions*: And it appears, that there is no necessity that any thing be removed, but that *superstitious Humour* and *untractable Temper* which reigns so powerfully among your Party, in order to accomplish that *blessed Union* which all good Men Endeavour after, and Pray for.

And now, my Brethren, upon a serious review of what I have written, I do think that I have returned a full and more than sufficient Answer

swer to that Paper which was drawn up in defence of the *Cause of Separation*, and triumphed in (even to my Face) as Unanswerable. I have followed the Author of it step by step, and have not omitted to take notice of the most impertinent thing he has said. The close Attendance which I have given to so silly and trifling a Scribbler cannot be Answer'd for any other way, than by telling the real Truth, which is, that I thought my self in Duty bound with *Meekness to instruct those*, in my own Parish, *that Oppose themselves*, tho' with never so weak Arguments; that I cannot think it becomes us, who have taken the Ministry thereof upon us, to suffer so excellent a Church to be run down, and its Constitution publickly and privately decry'd, and in the mean while stand still, as if we were either afraid to speak, or else had nothing to say in its defence; that tho' the Prejudices of its Adversaries are, it is to be fear'd, too strong to be removed, it is however proper to shew the Weakness of their Arguments, thereby to keep its own Members firm in its Communion, and to Arm them against the *flights of Men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*: And if I can but obtain this, by the pains I have herein taken, I shall have no cause to repent thereof.

These are the Principles upon which I have acted in this whole Affair, and therefore tho' you may deprive your selves of the Benefit thereof, by unkind Resentments and uncharitable Censures of this Work, yet you cannot rob me of the satisfaction of having done what I took to be my Duty, nor spoil the Acceptableness of an honest and well-meant Endeavour, with that God who neither *sees* nor *judges* as Man doth.

Where Obstinacy and Perverseness put a Bar in the Way, and Mens Judgments are corrupted with Passion and Prejudice, there can be no Hopes of doing good. But they who, divesting themselves of all these, are really desirous of it, may, I hope, receive some Satisfaction from the Considerations I have offer'd, however in the Books I have refer'd the Reader to.

I beseech you therefore to reduce your Judgments to an even poise, impartially weigh and consider things, and for a conclusion of all, suffer the Word of Exhortation from your own Reverend Mr. Baxter.

'I advise you, that if there be Parish-Churches orderly settled under *Poor Man's*
'the Magistrates Countenance, whose Teachers are sound, and promote *Family-book*
'the Power of Godliness in Concord, tho' an able Minister should ga- *P. 316.*
'ther a separated Church in the same place, out of that and other
'neighbouring Parishes, and should have stricter Communicants and Di-
'scipline, be not too forward to joyn your selves to that Separated
'Church, till you can prove, that the Hurt that will follow by Discord,
'Offence, Division, encouraging of Schism and Pride, is not like to be
'greater than your Benefit can compensate. Indeed, *he says*, where
'Liberty is such, as these Mischiefs are not like to follow, (*as among us*
'*you see they do*) take your Liberty, if your Benefit require it. *But then*
'*he adds in the very next words*, If this Separated Church be a factious

‘ Antichurch, set up contentiously against the Concordant Churches, tho’
 ‘ on pretence of greater Purity; and if their Meetings be employ’d in
 ‘ contention, and reviling others, and making them odious that are not
 ‘ of their mind, and in killing the Love of *Christians* to each other; and
 ‘ in condemning other Churches as no Churches, or such as may not law-
 ‘ fully be communicated with; and in puffing up themselves with Pride,
 ‘ as if they were the only *Churches of Christ*; avoid such Separated *Chur-*
 ‘ *ches*, as the Enemies of Love and Peace.

p. 321.

‘ Do not peevishly pick Quarrels with the Prayers of the Church, nor
 ‘ come to them with humorfome Prejudice; think not that you must stay
 ‘ away, or go out of the Church, for every passage that is disorderly,
 ‘ unmeet, yea, or unsound or untrue; for the Words of *Prayer* are the
 ‘ *Work of Man*. And while Men are fallible, imperfect, and sinful, their
 ‘ Prayers, and Praises, and Preaching will be like themselves: And he
 ‘ that is the highest Pretender and the peevishest Quarreller hath his own
 ‘ Failings.

p. 274.

‘ Division is wounding, and tends to death; abhor it as you love the
 ‘ Churches Welfare, or your own. The Wisdom from above is first
 ‘ pure, and then peaceable; never separate what God conjoyneth. It is
 ‘ the earthly, sensual, devilish Wisdom which causeth bitter Envyng, and
 ‘ Strife, and Confusion, and every Evil Work. *Blessed are the Peace-*
 ‘ *makers*.

This Advice is so proper and applicable to your *Case* and *Circumstan-*
ces, that I only need to add the Words of *St. Paul*, which I desire every
 Soul in my Parish to look upon with as much Regard, as if they had been
 immediately and particularly spoke to them by the blessed Apostle him-
 self.

Phil. 2. 1, 2.

If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of
Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels of Mercy,
fulfill ye my Joy, that ye be like minded, having the same Love,
being of one Accord, of one Mind.

Heb. 12. 14.

Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man
shall see the Lord.

I am

Your Faithful and Affectionate
 Pastor,

Jos. Harrison.

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